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The Laager Closes In

MAY 28 1976

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'Avalanches,' said Aneurin Bevan in his resignation speech in 1951, 'start with the movement of a very small stone.' Has that 'very small stone' now started to move in Southern Africa? It is easy, and probably perilous, to exaggerate the significance of the success the much-derided black nationalist guerrillas enjoyed on Easter Sunday in cutting both the road and rail links that connect Mr Smith's Rhodesia with Mr Vorster's South Africa. The railway line, after all, was restored within 24 hours and if the restoration of the prime road contact took longer it was because the Rhodesians, characteristically, still retain the same faith in 'search and destroy' operations that General Westmoreland originally displayed in Vietnam ten years ago. Yet if the blow the guerrillas struck was hardly mortal in security terms, it was as wounding as anything possibly could have been to white Rhodesia's psyche and morale. The words 'moment of truth' may have become a jaded parrot phrase: but it looks very much as if the parrot may at last have got through to the 270,000 white citizens of Rhodesia.

What do they really believe about their future and on what are their hopes ultimately pinned? There seems to be a discrepancy between what they believe is about to happen and what in reality is almost bound to occur. If the Rhodesians genuinely expect their current way of life to survive, then it must be because their confidence is placed, however fragilely, in Mr Vorster. Until now in the crisis that affects Southern Africa he may have played an ignoble part but it has not been an unintelligent one. He has, indeed, probably made only one major tactical mistake. As a child of the laager, he has apparently persuaded himself that in anything he does he must take united Afrikanerdom with him. For that reason he threw away what was probably his last opportunity for diverting the tide of history when he failed to persuade Mr Smith last August to recognise reality at the Victorian Falls conference.

Today, as a direct result, both Mr Vorster and Mr Smith are huddled together sharing a single hope. It is, to put it crudely, that the panga only has to begin slashing at white flesh for 'Western Christian [and commercial] civilisation' to refuse to stand idly by. It is, no doubt, in that context that the governments both in Pretoria and Salisbury optimistically view Dr Kissinger's arrival in Southern Africa next week – conveniently forgetting that his first port of call is not on either of them but rather on President Kaunda in Lusaka. He at least, together with President Nyerere of Tanzania, has already made his position abundantly plain – that, unless Mr Smith can finally be brought to see sense, there can be no alternative to war in Africa's penultimate (and possibly most insolent) race and class redoubt.

Yet if there is clarity from Zambia, Tanzania – and, naturally, from Mozambique – what is the message that issues forth from Britain? Unfortunately, the trumpet from Westminster gives an uncertain sound. True, there were some strong notes last February from Mr David Ennals (then the senior Minister of State at the Foreign Office); but no sooner had they been sounded than a 'mute' was placed upon them by some typically emollient words from Mr Callaghan (then the Foreign Secretary). If political history, and indeed human tragedy, operate inexorably on the principle that what matters is what people *believe* to be true rather than what *is* true, then a very special responsibility now lies at the door of Britain's new Prime Minister.

What Dr Kissinger decides to do next week is up to him – and whatever shred of credibility he retains among the American people. What Mr Callaghan now says, and does, is very much a matter for the British Labour movement. It should insist that he firmly and unequivocally terminates the fool's paradise in which the whites in Southern Africa have been encouraged to dwell for too long. Nothing could make a better start to his premiership than a bold and uncompromising statement from him now that, so far as the British Government is concerned, it is up to Mr Smith and Mr Vorster to work out their own salvation – and that if through obstinacy, intransigence or sheer stupidity they fail to do so, they have no right to count on anyone (least of all a Labour Britain) riding to their rescue.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

At the Waxworks

There's a certain rough justice in a large waxworks: when a public figure falls from power, or disappears from the headlines, he is carted off and dismantled. Madame Tussaud's seems to invite the press to these occasions, and there are photographs the next day of Mrs Castle's head being put on the shelf. But in a small waxworks, such as the House of Wax in Great Yarmouth, a greater clemency is used. The weekend sadist, drawn by the promise of Serge Rankowski, the Three-Eyed Polish Freak, or Mrs Louisa Merrifield, Painfully Poisoning her Employer Mrs Ricketts for Small Financial Gain, must pass first through a series of rooms that are packed with nostalgia. Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon have just got married. Colonel Nasser, Marshal Stalin and Air Marshal Lord Tedder pose awkwardly on either side of the present Pope. Clem Attlee, for some reason, is reading the *Sunday Times Business News*. Here are Gordon Richards, Len Hutton, Danny Blanchflower, Dai Dower and Randolph Turpin. And now it is 1964, and the Beatles are pioneering long hair. And then it is 1975, and Telly Savalas is pioneering no hair. There are apologetic notices: 'Patrons will appreciate that figures were correct in all details at the time and year of modelling.' But did Grace Kelly really wear those toy sunglasses, which are just about to fall off the end of her nose?

Among the Young Liberals, who were also in Yarmouth this weekend, one experienced the same nostalgia, and the same sense of dislocation in time. Some of the CND pamphlets were actually yellow with age. The people were oddly assorted – natural Tories, vulgar anarchists, dotty socialists, Scandinavian open sandwiches and a chap called Paul Johnson from Preston who was very keen on the legalisation of hash. They were all libertarians, and some called themselves libertarian socialists, but they noticeably lacked any common political tradition. They were against prejudice of any form – sexism, racism and (the new one) ageism: the 30-year limit for membership was criticised as ageist. The qualification for a Young Liberal, it was argued, was to be young at heart; and although the age limit was not in the end abolished there was a distinct feeling against throwing any one of the old comrades out of the waxworks. Where, after all, could they go from here?

The longest and most detailed resolution was about bicycles. It had been lovingly drawn up by a man of 35, who was also allowed to propose it. He cycled down the gangway to the microphone. 'Bicycles,' he told us, 'are now really beginning to move.' But he wanted all kinds of things: he wanted to be allowed to cycle on towpaths alongside rivers and canals, along disused railway lines, along with-flow bus lanes, along contra-flow bus lanes, cycle lanes, cycle pavements and cycle priority routes. And he got his way, too. Nobody objected that he might get in the way of the buses, and nobody asked why on earth he wanted to cycle along disused railway lines, and whether perhaps he might like them as they were (all bumpy and burgeoning with primroses), or whether they were to be covered with tarmac first. They voted for major developments whereby roads would be raised at intersections, and cyclists could pass underneath, and also for cyclist-controlled traffic lights. In a rather less detailed resolution, they also voted to abolish the state.

And when they'd abolished the state they came on to the subject of the monarchy, and they were just about to abolish the monarchy and make the Speaker of the House into a kind of president when somebody said – hang on, if we've just abolished the state, why do we need a head of state? So they decided not to abolish the monarchy now but to leave it to the individual's conscience, but they condemned Princess Anne's views on fox-hunting and decided to sabotage all hunts. They wondered whether to eat less meat, but even the man who proposed this was not sure that it would do much good, so they dropped it. They were against the right to property in general, but rather in favour of it in India. They resolved (and I quote): 'Whilst we support the extension of the 1974 Rent Act, we recognise that it only serves a system we completely oppose – landlordism.' At one point, the chairman read out an urgency resolution about the Partito Radicale in Italy. He said (between fits of giggles) that there was a hunger strike over whether the Partito Radicale should have equal television time, and that he hadn't the foggiest notion how to pronounce the name of the leader of the Partito Radicale, but would the conference send him a message of support? And conference did. On the whole, it would not be unfair to say that they behaved like stupid idiots throughout. But when it came to the elections for party offices, the stupidity was spectacular.

It's done by the single transferable vote, of course, and you can write in whatever or whomever you wish. Last year, there had been a large number of votes for Robert McKenzie's swingometer. This year, in the vote for Galactic Emperor (a post designed to siphon off some of the high spirits) Tony Benn made a showing and so did Paddington Bear. But in the vote for the six vice-presidents (rather a large number, for an anti-bureaucratic movement) there were 81 write-in candidates with one vote each. It took about half an hour to read the results. Yasser Arafat was eliminated on about the thirteenth redistribution, but George Davis became a VP, as did also Good Ol' Charlie Brown. Peter Hain will be writing to George Davis to tell him of his election, and that, if he accepts the post, he is entitled to make statements on behalf of the Young Liberals. This system is more frivolous than it may seem, by the way. Hornsey Young Liberals have made Vladimir Bukovsky, the Russian prisoner, their VP, and are urging other branches to do the same. They then write to the Russians and say – since Bukovsky is our VP, can he please come and visit us? It must amuse the Russian authorities (and it would astonish Bukovsky) to know that he occupies a position in the Young Liberals which is junior to Good Ol' Charlie Brown.

At least, however, there were only nine votes for Norman Scott in the election for president. Hain, who is embarking on his last year in this post, won the contest hands down. His future is uncertain: he has refused several offers to stand as a Liberal MP and has great differences with the parliamentary party. Politically, he has more in common with Benn than with most of the Liberals, and one cannot help feeling that he has simply got into the wrong stream. The rest of the Young Liberals are distinguished by their lack of ambition – their favourite term of abuse is party hack, or careerist. A large number of them consider the Liberal Party to be 'an irrelevancy'. Power comes up from the bottom, rather than down from the top, you see, and therefore in a sense that's basically what we're fighting against, in a grass-roots situation.

So there they are, like the figures in the waxworks, tatty, ill-assorted, and thoroughly unconvincing. They had little to say about the Liberal leadership, excepting that they don't like Jeremy Thorpe for political reasons. But their chairman, Steve Atack, was not prepared to say that Thorpe should go, because he couldn't see who should replace him. Richard Wainwright was the only MP at the conference. He is popular with the Young Liberals, since he was once a conscientious objector, and since he supports the old Grimond left-wing policies. It was believed in Great Yarmouth that Wainwright had hoped to get Young Liberal support for the ousting of Thorpe. Well, even if he had done so, I should have thought that Thorpe could relax on that score. He has, after all, gone before the firing-squad once already. He refused the blind-fold. His executioners lost heart. It would be difficult, even for a conscientious objector, to call him out again.

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Alexander Cockburn

Survival Course for the CIA

There was a little story in the *New York Times* the other day which recorded the fact that applications for membership are pouring into the CIA. Graduates, apparently pessimistic about the future of private enterprise, are heading sensibly for the protective skirts of big government. Doubtless accepting the risk of possible, though very unlikely, elimination by the other side – or, more realistically, by in-house technicians fooling around with some new potion – these graduates plainly appreciate the significance of a secure life-time job.

A year ago such optimism might have seemed less justified. The CIA was reeling from the after-effects of disclosures about its illegal activities within the United States. Disclosure followed disclosure: the assassination attempts, the collusion with common criminals (however dignified by attributed membership of 'the Mafia'), the allegedly disastrous merger with the business schemes of Howard Hughes in order to hoist a Russian submarine off the bottom of the Pacific. On and on went the list of incompetence and villainy. Congressmen called for new oversight committees, for prior clearance of covert operations: some even went so far as to suggest the elimination of the CIA altogether.

The Administration was forced steadily back. The Rockefeller Commission on the CIA was hurled into the breach. Even its report failed to quell the uproar. The Senate Intelligence Committee, headed by Senator Frank Church, settled into a prolonged investigation. It is true that it voted to ignore the National Security Agency, infinitely larger and certainly as ripe for investigation as the CIA itself. Nonetheless it was assumed that the committee, fuelled by the ardent attention of the American press and networks, would probably force legislative reform upon what is cheerily called 'the American Intelligence Community'.

At the same time the House Intelligence Committee, after some internecine bickering, was carrying forward its investigation into the performance of the CIA. This committee opted for the enjoyable task of demonstrating that the CIA was simply incompetent in performing its required functions: that it had failed to predict the turn of events in Portugal, failed to predict the outbreak of war in the Middle East in 1973, failed more or less all the way down the line. All these researches were accompanied by a torrent of publicity. A steady flow of leaks and comment kept the American people up to date with the unpalatable facts of American intelligence activities. Editorials and reportage generally condemned the CIA and urged diligent investigation and reform. The seed planted by radical periodicals such as the now-defunct *Ramparts* in the mid-1960s had sprouted and multiplied into a vast plantation. It was entirely respectable for established American media to give the CIA a sound kick in the teeth.

Then, on 23 December 1975, Richard Welch, the CIA's station chief in Athens, was assassinated. It was one of those occasions when the rapid turnabout in 'public opinion', as enunciated by reporters and pundits, came within the space of 24 hours. It was revealed that *Counterspy*, an anti-CIA periodical based in Washington, had some time previously published material which might have led to the exposure of Welch (who lived conspicuously in the traditional CIA residence in Athens). I remember watching Daniel Schorr, covering the intelligence beat for CBS, interrogating *Counterspy*'s editorial committee. Schorr had previously been unremitting in his exposés of CIA skulduggery. Now, with equal ferocity, he assailed the CIA's critics. His performance was, in fact, a lesson in the implications of what respectable journalists like to call 'objective reporting', which amounts to pru-

'Right – anybody goes over 3 per cent – nab 'im!'

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dent comprehension of which way the wind happens to be blowing.

Amid such onslaughts the *Counterspy* cadre appeared to be discomfited. And so, by extension, were all the critics of the CIA. Welch's body was brought back to Washington in a blaze of publicity unparalleled for the relatively infrequent martyrs of US intelligence. He was buried at Arlington Cemetery. President Ford attended the obsequies. Fresh from the funeral rites, William Colby, then Director of Central Intelligence, proclaimed that Welch (who, it has been subsequently alleged, was actually inciting the Christian Phalange in the Lebanon to acts of violence at the time of his death) was essentially a victim of enemies of the CIA within the United States. It was their irresponsible denunciations, he implied, which had led to his exposure and assassination. Within the American media caution rapidly succeeded investigative valour. Was it permissible to name CIA officers abroad? Perhaps not. Was it, indeed, wise to promulgate calls for reform? Perhaps such a course would be irresponsible, altogether too hasty.

Then, shortly after the New Year, leaked accounts of the House Committee's draft report appeared in the *New York Times* and – as reported by Daniel Schorr – on the CBS network. And not so long after this, the bulk of this report was published in the *Village Voice* – a weekly newspaper based in New York. It was rapidly revealed in the *Washington Post* (which had not been leaked a copy of the report) that the person supplying the *Village Voice* with its copy was none other than Daniel Schorr. Although the material in the report was actually highly condemnatory of the CIA, attention was at once focused on Schorr's release of the material. The House Committee itself had voted for publication of the report; nonetheless the full House had – in the wake of Welch's demise – voted for the report's suppression. Timidity forthwith gave way to outrage. The will of the House had, after all, been flouted.

What then happened was that senior members of the House – traditionally friends and protectors of the CIA – saw their chance for counter-attack. A decrepit body called the House Ethics Committee sprang into action, voting itself an enormous budget to investigate the circumstances of the leak to Schorr from the House Intelligence Committee. Amid such tumult investigation of the CIA itself was forgotten.

Such unalluring antics were duplicated in the American media. Virtuous journalists rounded on the wretched Schorr, imputing to him all manner of unpleasant motives. They range from simple accusations of profiteering to recrimination that he leaked the report to an outfit as louche as the *Village Voice*. Schorr's employer – CBS – first of all suspended him from his normal intelligence beat, subsequently suspended him (with pay) altogether. There ensued a civil war within the American press, with some saying that Schorr was a martyr to the First Amendment and all that this implied, and others mumbling that he was a pushy sort of fellow who deserved everything that he got.

Then, on 18 February, President Ford announced an executive order about the CIA and its functions. His order sanctioned many of the activities previously performed by the CIA on an illegal basis. Furthermore, Ford named his own oversight committee for the CIA. It was to be headed by Robert Murphy, a man who started his career in the same embassy as Allen Dulles (formerly a Director of Central Intelligence) in Switzerland in 1919 and who had been an intelligence adviser to the President during the Bay of Pigs and during many of the assassination attempts against foreign leaders attempted by the CIA. As a sop, Ford announced that assassination would henceforth be illegal.

The counter-attack by the CIA was virtually complete. After all the strains of Watergate, the apparent perjuries of its former Director, Richard Helms, the exposés in Congress, it looked – and looks – as though nothing whatsoever will happen to the Agency or to the way in which it is to be 'supervised'.

Only one act in the entire melancholy drama remains, which is the final report of the Senate committee headed by Frank Church. Church himself is presently pursuing an entirely invisible campaign for the presidency. The report of his committee, in many volumes, is supposed to be published at the end of this month. There will be some agitation, some brief resuscitation of the glorious outrage of last year. But the fact is that the old congressional committees, which gave the CIA and the rest of the US intelligence apparatus free rein in the past, will still dominate congressional relations with the CIA. More or less nothing will have changed.

It's an exemplary story. President Nixon, after a couple of years of public battering, had to resign; the CIA, sustaining assaults of almost equal fierceness, survived in the ways that bureaucracies almost always do. It has simply outlasted the opposition. Now it has to face the more puzzling question of what it is going to do with itself for the rest of the decade.

New York

David Leitch

Tear Gas in the Boul' Mich'

Paris over Easter suddenly came alive with ominous ghosts who had supposedly been safely exorcised towards the end of June 1968. The student protest was like something from an old newsreel – young people in their thousands briefly ruling the streets, a pall of tear-gas adding a René Clair patina to the Boul' Mich', the pig-snouts and astronaut visors of CRS riot police charging simply for the hell of it. We had been here before. And for a moment the austere present was overlaid with images from an ampler, more utopian past, reminders not only of battles long ago but of a kind of late 1960s innocence, a quality of unfallen hope soon silted over by the sands of reaction.

Local commentators were obliged to use the explosive comparison with May 1968, when student protest led to a general strike of 10 million workers, and very nearly to an anti-De Gaulle *coup*, simply because this was clearly the most widespread expression of discontent at the university level that has occurred for eight years. The students' 'action' day brought over 100,000 marchers into the streets throughout France. No major university centre was spared. The largest students' union (UNEF) is backing a strike which in some universities has been maintained for two months already. More than 60 of the country's 75 universities and colleges have no prospects of post-Easter classes, the union says, and the remainder can expect 'major disruptions'.

The extent of academic solidarity is impressive. Not only are the students united, but the teachers' union (SNEsup) is working with them. Vocational faculties such as medicine, which are not affected by the so-called government reforms designed to make various scientific and arts courses more relevant to the depressed jobs market, have discarded their normal conservative posture and joined the strike.

In the face of such unprecedented unity the government policy of standing firm and doing almost nothing is hard to comprehend. Madame Alice Saunier-Seïté, the responsible minister, shows no sign either of conciliating the anti-reformers, or realising that she herself has been set up as scapegoat when some deal is done, as finally it must be.

Government policy – or inaction – on the university question has so far been explained in terms of an appeal to 'the silent majority'. Officials have been saying that they will impose moderation at the moment when – unless they do – an academic year will be irretrievably 'lost', and their diplomas with it. This was an argument used in 1968, when it had a certain weight, insofar as certain faculties, among which the 'medics' were then prominent, were concerned at missed courses. This time the Easter demo of 'moderates', marching in defence of 'the right to work', succeeded in collecting only a few hundred students.

The essence of the present situation then is a curious lack of either fragmentation or fluidity; precisely the reverse of 1968. It is also interesting to note that this time the students are campaigning in favour of the status quo. It is change they are against. There is something paradoxical about this, since the object of the 'reforms' is to make it easier for graduates to find jobs, and the employment question is certainly the student's major preoccupation. It is evident that to a certain extent the 'reforms' are a pretext, or even a symbol. The current protest is an expression of generalised discontent, and particularly of anti-government feeling.

This was of course true in 1968 but the

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protest expressed itself very differently. '*Métro, Boulot, Dodo*' was one of the most popular slogans, an expression of disgust at the monotonous prospects for employment in the high growth, highly consumer-oriented society that was late-Gaullist France. Now the question is more of how to find any kind of job. '*L'Imagination au Pouvoir!*' was another May 1968 invention – no Métro station was complete without it, scrawled in lurid day-glo. Compare the snappy refrain the student marchers were chanting this time: 'Dans les facs, Saunier-Sïeté n'a pas cédé, c'est tous ensemble qu'il faut lutter!' There has evidently been a decline in the level of student aphorism since 1968, which brings us inevitably to the question of who the leaders are.

In 1968 there was Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Beginning as an activist on the largely middle-class campus at Nanterre, leading action on such apparently local issues as what time the girl's dormitory should be closed, he developed in a matter of six weeks into a kind of student Trotsky, although notably lacking a Lenin to support him, or a Kerensky in the Elysée when it came to the final push. Individualists like 'Dany le Rouge' managed through their oratory, their imagination, and an ability to find a sympathetic response from the media, to control events, or at least to give them constantly changing impetus. The unions and their leaders, in the van this time, were some way behind the small factional leaders in 1968.

Even though they are so notably hard to find it is probably therefore an error to underestimate the potential influence of small factions, the *groupuscules* of 1968, in the current conflict. There are the extreme Rightists, but as was shown on 15 April their main function has been to provide brief footage for TV crews vainly searching for 'balance' in a one-sided situation. A more significant development perhaps has been the early emergence of what have been delightfully named 'uncontrolled elements' – that is, groups on the edge of the main demo, who decline to be directed by the efficient marshals from UNEF, which insisted they were 'false students'. Over Easter these 'marginals', who operated mainly in side streets, managed an impressive amount of looting.

The UNEF strategy at the moment is to enlarge their base of support among non-student unions. They will march again today on their own, and send massive contingents to the May Day rally of the CGT and CFDT, who are in the course of deciding their attitude to the students. It is likely that May Day will turn into a monolithic anti-government protest, and it may be that the students will be drowned among the legions of trade unionists on their traditional big day. There will be plenty of opportunity for the '*éléments incontrôlés*' on the sidelines. The question of employment does not affect only students – there are thousands of unemployed kids in the outer suburbs who long ago saw their last of higher education, and have been creating their own law and order question which so incenses M. Poniatowski. Disorder on the streets in France has a habit of escalating rapidly, and along unexpected lines. The 'false' students should be worrying Madame Saunier-Seïté as much as the real ones.

Nicholas Terdre

Brazil – Miracle or Mirage?

According to Senhor Roberto Campos, the Brazilian Ambassador to Britain, 'President Geisel is making honest efforts (and is achieving considerable success) in the direction of three desirable objectives – political liberalisation, improvement in income distribution, and curbing violation of human rights' (letter to *The Times*, 27 February). Leaving aside the fact that Senhor Campos's recognition of these objectives as desirable is news for many Brazilians, it is by no means generally accepted here in Brazil that President Geisel is either making honest efforts or achieving success. A somewhat deeper look at the situation is necessary to understand why.

Geisel – who arrives in London on an official visit next month – came to office on a wave of reaction within the military as a whole against the reputation they were gaining, thanks to the escalating use of violence, torture and murder by the internal security forces under the previous President, General Médici (1969-74). The keynote of his programme was to be *distensão*, a concept meaning decompression or, as we might say, taking the pressure off a bit. The choice of *distensão* was pragmatic more than moral, as a senator of ARENA, the government party, made clear: 'Rather than a gesture of goodwill, *distensão* represents a need on the part of the system itself to regain a popular consensus, in order to find new patterns of support.' In other words the military regime was becoming dangerously unpopular.

As it happened, the greatest enemies of *distensão* lay within the armed forces themselves, in the shape of the extreme right-wing elements known collectively as the *linha dura* or hard-liners. With the civilian population as a whole glad of the possibility of a little liberalisation, the question of whether *distensão* was a viable policy depended mainly on the balance of power between Geisel and the hard-liners.

The first big obstacle for *distensão* came in the November 1974 elections, in which the Opposition party MDB made unprecedentedly large gains. The results were unfavourable, but warding off pressure from the hard-liners to declare them void, Geisel accepted them and declared the elections a victory for democracy.

But in January 1975 the internal security forces, which are controlled by the hard-liners, began a series of arrests of alleged members of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), many of whom happened to be MDB affiliates. The arrests have taken place all over the country, involve hundreds of people, and are still continuing today. A number of those arrested have died under torture. This campaign has been widely interpreted here as a deliberate attempt by the hard-liners to discredit MDB, and by showing that subversion is still rife, to make further *distensão* impossible.

If Geisel wanted to obstruct this campaign, he certainly did not have the power to do so, and would anyway have been accused of aiding the communists. And while he was left powerless on the sidelines, the spectres of subversion conjured up by the arrests began seriously to undermine his position within the military until, in April 1975, he was reportedly obliged to make a number of concessions to the hard-liners, including undertakings not to interfere with the Institutional Acts which are the linch-pin of the present 'state of exception' in Brazil, nor to allow any investigation of the activities of the internal security forces.

This effectively put an end to *distensão* as a policy with a meaningful, rather than merely a propaganda, content, as it has since become. The first public acknowledgement of this occurrence was made in a speech Geisel delivered the following August, in which he said: 'The Government will not give up the exceptional powers at its disposal, nor will it allow, under whatever disguises, pressure from factions or interest groups intending to artificially leap stages in the process of political development' – a new, tough, stance which he has often repeated since.

Another way of examining whether *distensão* has come to an end is to look at the position of the opposition in Brazil today. Is the MDB being allowed an ever-greater participation in deciding the future of the country? On a more basic level, is it allowed to speak its mind freely? The truth is that the MDB today is an intimidated party, with many members in prison and a perpetual threat hanging over the heads of the others. In the last few months, Geisel has many times made clear to the MDB the limits of the 'democratic' game: no criticism of the necessity for a military regime with dictatorial powers during the indefinite future, no criticism of the activities of the internal security forces, no outright opposition to the dominating presence of foreign capital in the Brazilian economy. For MDB politicians who disobey, there awaits the summary punishment of *cassação*, being stripped of political office and deprived of political rights for 10 years. Though intended more as a threat to keep to Opposition quiet, this power has been used by Geisel against five elected MDB politicians this year: in January, against Marcelo Gato and Nelson Fabiano, who made clear allusions to the fact that 'confessions' are obtained under torture; in March, against Amaury Muller and Nadir Rossetti, who made speeches denouncing the military dictatorship; and now in April against Lysaneas Maciel, who had the temerity to denounce the *cassações* of his companions. Is this perhaps what Senhor Campos meant when he said in the letter quoted above: 'President Geisel, being used to democratic criticism from the

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Brazilian Opposition party . . .'?

In the face of this threat, the MDB leadership has become ultra-cautious; its refusal of requests from members to institute parliamentary inquiries into the human rights issue and censorship, on the grounds that they would be provocative, indicate the degree of confidence it has in the tolerance of the Government. But for all its unwillingness as a party to take a stand, what are the MDB's prospects if, as seems probable, given the unpopularity of the Government, it wins the municipal elections scheduled for next November? From Geisel's point of view, ever since he abandoned *distensão*, he no longer has the option of allowing the MDB to win elections, even municipal ones. Thus his recent speech to an ARENA meeting, in which he said, 'It is vital that the ARENA win these elections, because afterwards I am going to have to say that the ARENA holds the majority of votes in the country', takes an ominous ring. And if this is laying the groundwork for cancelling the elections, as many people here think, then the words of an ARENA deputy define the possibilities even more starkly: 'We will win, whether by the vote or by the gun.'

In retrospect, it seems that the *distensão* policy lacked two important prerequisites – an acceptance among a sufficiently large number of the military, who after all still run the country; and an economy strong enough to allow an easing-off in labour repression. One of the major reasons for Geisel's visits to Europe at this time is precisely the need to find new sources of finance to bolster up the Brazilian miracle-turned-mirage. An indication in itself that the economic, and hence the political and social, situation in Brazil is likely to get worse, not better, in the course of this year.

São Paulo

Donald Gould

Living Death

By the time this article appears in print Karen Quinlan may be dead. If so, she will have died to the accompaniment of the kind of frightful and frightening publicity which, in this country, used to surround the hanging of notorious and pathetic murderers like Ruth Ellis, in the days when we still went for the rope. Since the announcement of the ruling of the New Jersey Supreme Court that Miss Quinlan's father should be allowed to switch off the respirator which is keeping his daughter alive, the hospital in which she lies has had to employ security guards to ward off sightseers. More than a thousand telephone calls have been received from concerned citizens who wish to view the condemned person. Whoever now throws whatever switch on whatever machine has heretofore kept Karen Quinlan 'alive', will be branded as an executioner. This is the inevitable result of involving the courts in matters which are, by their nature, incapable of a satisfactory legal resolution.

Karen Quinlan went into a coma almost exactly a year ago after, it is thought, swallowing tranquillisers on top of a number of gin-and-tonics. As a result parts of her brain suffered permanent damage. She has no awareness, and has only been kept alive by a respirator, tube feeding, and other extraordinary means. Without these artificial supports she would have died soon after first losing consciousness. None of the doctors involved have ever held out any hope of any recovery. Under these circumstances her father signed a form of release last July so that her doctors could turn off the respirator. They refused. The parents therefore petitioned a New Jersey State court, seeking leave to withdraw treatment so that their daughter might die. In November, after weeks of legal, clinical, philosophical and emotional arguments, the judge, who had been hearing the case without a jury, refused the permission asked for. He held that the courts do not have the power to hand down 'God-like rulings' which would lead to the death of people not found guilty of capital crime.

The parents thereupon appealed to the New Jersey Supreme Court which, in a unanimous decision, announced three weeks ago, reversed the ruling of the lower court, appointed Miss Quinlan's father her legal guardian, and said that she should be allowed to die if he could persuade 'competent medical authorities' to agree formally that there was no reasonable chance of a recovery. The seven judges ruled that Karen's condition was such that her right to privacy and the release of death had become stronger than the state's interest in preserving human life. The State of New Jersey, the hospital in which Karen has been treated, and the two doctors who have been looking after her have all now said that they will not appeal to the United States Supreme Court. Mr Quinlan has therefore been left with the agonising business of securing the required formal medical approval for his daughter's death, and then arranging for the deed to be done.

The parents are reported to be doing their best to keep the end of the tragedy a private matter. Their lawyer has said: 'Now the decision is out of the public and legal arena, and has been returned to the sacred realm of the privacy of the family, the physicians, and the hospital.' But, of course, nothing of the sort has happened. The spotlights aren't going to be turned off simply because the legal arguments are over. Everybody concerned, except Karen herself, is suffering great distress and disturbance in a conflict which could have been resolved with far less bitterness and grief many months ago.

Why did the doctors refuse to let Karen die, once her father had accepted the sad truth that there was no hope? The most cynical, and, perhaps, least likely explanation, is that keeping the poor girl 'alive' has been costing the state of New Jersey £225 a day, and that, so long as she survived, she was a valuable property.

There are other considerations. Karen has never been dead by any of the currently accepted criteria of death. Despite her total and almost certainly irreversible loss of all awareness, and therefore, many would argue, the end of her existence as a person, parts of her brain have gone on functioning. She has even been able to breathe without the aid of a respirator for periods of half-an-hour or so. She retains many reflexes showing that her central nervous system is 'alive'. Anybody withholding measures capable of sustaining the multitude of living processes still active within Karen's body might feel that they were laying themselves open to a moral, if not a legal, charge of manslaughter. How much of a non-person do you have to be before losing the right to live? What is the difference between the painless destruction of somebody born an idiot, and a refusal to preserve the life of somebody made an idiot by disease or accident? It was suggested during the legal quibblings surrounding the Quinlan case that there were parallels between the turning-off of a life made futile by accident, and the Nazi-like acceptance of the propriety of exterminating natural idiots.

But whatever the moral doubts of the doctors and officials in charge of Karen's body, they must also have been powerfully influenced by the need to protect themselves against litigation. Oscar Millard has recently described in the NS (2 April) how the whole shape of medical practice in the United States is being distorted by the growing national habit of suing doctors for vast damages when things go wrong. Malpractice suits have become so frequent, and the damages awarded so vast, that doctors are now frightened to do anything which a judge might later decide was inappropriate. As Millard remarked: 'Concern over protection against the malpractice suit has come to transcend the Hippocratic Oath.'

The whole sorry story of Karen Quinlan is largely the result of the manner in which the practice of medicine has become increasingly bound up with the law. Her doctors would probably not have hesitated to turn off her machines had they not been frightened of the legal consequences. But they were frightened. Therefore her parents were driven to the courts. And once that happened nobody felt able to take a step without legal authority.

Lawyers are not doctors. The first judge in the Quinlan case said that he was sympathetic to the parents' pleas, but that his answer had to be made in the light of the law alone, and without regard to the dictates of compassion. But the practice of medicine *is* concerned with compassion. Let us keep the law out of it.

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

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Profile: Michael Foot

The Nearly Man

Half-way through the Labour leadership contest Michael Foot made a little-noticed speech in Swindon, where his gift for peroration led him to say:

> I remember the mood which swept this country in the years after 1940. Overnight almost, Britain became a country suffused by what I would describe as a socialist inspiration. The sense of common purpose for the whole community took command, the class barriers started to come down, the unrivalled skill and ingenuity of the British people, so long stifled by the pre-war Tory Establishment, was unleashed.

As well as any other Foot performance, this expresses the gap between reputation and reality, or to put it another way, between the Leveller bugbear of the Tories and the shabby tiger of the Left. 'The mood of 1940', after all, involved coalition government, the maintenance of Empire, a war economy, rationing and (for Foot himself)

Beaverbrook Newspapers and the attachment to certain Establishment friends like Randolph Churchill, whom he never forsook. Pressed on such an over-literal interpretation, he can always reply that he is invoking the spirit rather than the letter. But such a distinction is hard to sustain in the ruthless world of cabinet and office. His beloved Hazlitt once made the uncomfortable observation that 'the love of liberty is the love of others, the love of power is the love of ourselves'. As the man who nearly undid Gaitskell, nearly shamed Wilson, nearly led the party, nearly made James Callaghan compromise his orthodox government, Foot must sometimes wonder which of those caps now fits.

Interviewed in 1968 about the Labour Left and its possibilities, Foot declaimed:

> It would be a terrible curse for the Labour movement, and would destroy its vitality, were it to allow economics to capture its main thinking. There was once an argument between Lamb and Hazlitt and some others about Newton's science. Someone said that Newton's scientific discoveries had interfered with the beauty of the rainbow. Lamb, who was rather drunk by the end of the evening, got up and moved a toast: 'Confusion to Mathematics'. I think we should move a toast 'Confusion to Economics'.

It is easy to play the quotation game, but how different, how very different, from the man who now denounces *Tribune* for fudging inflation, who says there is no alternative to Healey, who upholds the iron laws of economic imperative. True, there have been moments (over statutory enforcement of the £6 limit and over the £8,500 income ceiling) when he has felt his attachment to the Government under strain. But he won the most important of those two battles, and also feels that the new industrial relations legislation is a neglected triumph. To have fought such an uncompromising defence of union rights through a conservative cabinet, a critical House of Commons and a reactionary House of Lords is, as he says, no slight affair.

Yet today he appears as the fig leaf on a government formed in another image; one of emollience laced with jobbery and drift. Moreover, with the sole and (at least publicly) unexciting exception of Albert Booth, Foot has failed to place or defend any of his former comrades. He fought hard for the lost cause of Barbara Castle, but secured nothing for the Eric Heffers, the Neil Kinnocks or Judith Harts. Even Norman Atkinson was made an offer so *diminuendo* that he had to refuse.

The key to an apparently complete declension is this – Michael Foot has always prized Labour unity and success more dearly than have his detested right-wing opponents – most of whom were too thick to see that his very rebellions were out of love for his party. The most casual reading of his *Aneurin Bevan* makes that clear. Only give us a majority, he now argues, and we can begin afresh. But, in the meantime, we face short-term crisis on the scale of 1931, and a petulant resignation would upset the whole balance between 'movement' and 'government' (a distinction he still maintains). How, then, would his leadership have been different? Well, planning agreements and the NEB would not have been so emascu-

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lated, import controls would have been considered across the board (though he does not scorn the idea of retaliation) and there would have been more egalitarian gestures such as cuts in ministerial pay. Indeed, Foot now feels that Benn must and will pick up the fallen red banner; next time, as ever in these cases, will be different.

And yet, the conservative and sentimental side of his nature is always obtruding. As he wrote once in a justly-neglected biography of Harold Wilson:

> Often in the eyes of Labour's opponents the test of a Labour leader's courage has been how resolute he may be in resisting the demands of his followers . . . he is pledged to make fundamental changes in society, but the weight of the old society bears heavily on those who seek the transformation.

This thought, with its textually Marxist echo from the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, sits unwell with the sudden access of 'common sense' short-term responsibility. It also neatly describes the social reformer's dilemma, and shows how the net in his case was certainly spread in full view of the victim. Or so, at least, think many of his old friends and comrades. Still, is there really such a disjunction between today's Foot and the man who wrote an adulatory picture-profile of the india-rubber Wilson, who gave Humphry Berkeley an open letter for Labour selection committees, who today admires Denis Healey, and even Edward Short, as superbly practical and competent ministers? Perhaps, as Hazlitt had it, 'we can scarcely hate anyone that we know'. Gaitskell excepted from that judgment, Foot seems too damn nice and friendly for the infighting business, too scrupulous to cash in his 137 chips, too fumbling as he tries to insert the razor-blade in the potato.

For instance, had it been Callaghan and not Wilson who invited him to join a cabinet, would his instinct have been the same? He barely knows the new Prime Minister, and even during the battle over *In Place of Strife* there was minimal personal contact. A man who had voted for the excommunication of Bevan was, in any case, hardly likely to command Foot's affection. But, despite his strong showing in the PLP, the Honourable Member for Ebbw Vale has not driven any hard bargains. Having stood successfully for the 'shadow' cabinet in 1970, he feels more in duty bound, more strongly about the proprieties than do many of his more hard-headed rivals.

He is haunted by a fear of schism (where his Continental connections have left him very impressed with British Labour's monolith) and personally proposed the special dispensation on dissent for ministers when it came to the EEC referendum. Wilson being agreeable, Foot then took the Left down the road to isolationism, arguing that Britain alone had the chance of independent Labour government which was denied to the coalition-prone lesser breeds on the European mainland. This contrast between Left-loyalty and veteran iconoclasm has left him unrepentant about the Market, which he still regards as a fetter on Labour's hopes. But, just as he felt that Britain could go it alone for socialism in Europe, so his one-time comrade Jim Sillars feels that Scotland can go it alone for socialism once rid of the United Kingdom. It is these new thrones and powers that Foot now faces as Leader of the House.

On devolution, he takes a strong and determined view that it should be generously offered rather than grudgingly extorted from the reluctant English ascendancy. His young friends like Neil Kinnock receive short shrift when they protest that Welsh Wales has no need of an extra tier of government. Foot wants to cut with the Nationalist grain fast, because he fears that otherwise the Tories will pull a flanker; sacrifice their patriotism for their self-interest much as he feels they did over Europe.

This growling defence of the broad conventions also informs his attitude to the House whose business he must now determine. Select Committees he distrusts, as he distrusts anything which detracts from the hallowed Chamber. The idea, also, of Labour men cheek by jowl with Tories for so long in a committee room – this sticks in his craw. Taunted and reviled for so long as a 'splitter', he cares more for the survival and health of the party than any career machine-man of the new Callaghan stamp. His faith in the leftward-moving good intent of Labour's union prop forwards also remains undimmed: the Department of Employment confirmed him in that view and strengthened trade union opinion that 'he's a good fellow and 'twill all be well'.

Over the last ten years or so – and particularly since the defeat of Labour at the polls in 1970, Foot has been afraid of ending up like Jimmy Maxton, of being written off as a 'good fellow'. Very left-wing of course, but basically sound. Witty, too. Nice chap to have around and very decent when you get to know him. Has to get it off his chest every now and again. Like his hero Aneurin Bevan, he feels the need to desert the prophetic wilderness, to get his hands dirty on the levers of power. He bloomed like a rose under the fury and wrath of the newspaper proprietors, enjoyed the vituperation in the leader columns where all too often he had been (and still is) praised for his moderation and restraint. But in the end he lacks the killer instinct, and could never muster the hatred which might nourish it. The only person he has ever hated was the inconsequential Desmond Donnelly ('that little nark') and like Bevan he is ultimately capable of making his pact with the devil and shouldering the burdens of collective responsibility. As with most poachers turned gamekeeper, it has meant becoming a stickler for the once-despised rules.

'Michael,' says possibly his greatest admirer in the House, 'worries a lot about how the rank and file view him. If he goes on like this he won't have to worry. They won't care what he does any more.' Cruel, but not malicious. A Callaghan betrayal cannot kill hope at its roots; a sell-out by Foot does do so, because it feeds the cynicism which kills politics and says that they're all the same in the end. His appearance of loyalty in the present *galère* does not bear out Hazlitt's judgment that 'man is a toad-eating animal'; rather it vindicates him (*On Prejudice*) in concluding that 'the most fluent talkers or most plausible reasoners are not always the justest thinkers'. No amount of *hwyl* will deflect the 'nearly man' judgment; it would be the supreme irony if his sense of honour and loyalty now led him to go down with a ship not of his own making.

Roger Woddis

Dangerous Criminal

Mr Kim Chi Ha, South Korean author of ironic poems against the Seoul government, goes on trial this week and faces a possible death sentence.

Bring in the prisoner, guard him well;
Frail he may be but rarely silent.
Beware his pen: this man is violent.
Hot-eyed from his unheated cell
He stands before you. Note his crime:
Attacking the authorities in rhyme.

Observe his manner, his bruised lips curled,
A terrorist of the most vicious kind,
Armed with an explosive mind,
A self-acknowledged detonator of the world.
More deadly than bullets his astringent lines
Strike to the bone. His metaphors are mines.

Art is seditious, poems rock the state,
Therefore no mercy for Mr Kim.
Fines are no use, exile too good for him:
Abroad, this enemy could still communicate.
No punishment meted out is too severe
For the outward-looking eye, the inner ear.

Leave him to practise his subversive trade
And no one is safe. He must learn
The public good is not the poet's concern
But spinning green thoughts in a green shade.
Make him as harmless as the humming-bird:
Nothing's as lethal as the written word.

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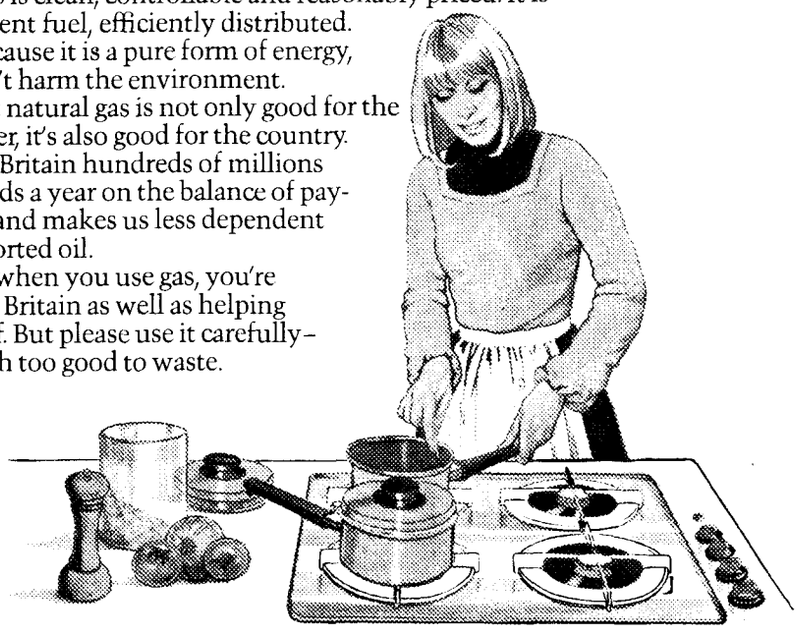

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5 Have your gas equipment properly maintained and serviced
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David Owen*

The NHS and Public Expenditure

There is now a growing awareness at all levels of British society, among politicians, industrialists and trade unionists, that Britain must substantially increase its investment in its industrial base. The trend of the de-industrialisation in terms of investment and the reduction in the manufacturing labour force must stop. To ensure that there is room for industrial investment both private and public, restraint in public expenditure is now vital. Public expenditure arguments sadly centre mainly on the global figures of expenditure and there is little argument about the correct distribution of public expenditure within a given total. When expenditure restraint is necessary the real challenge is to distribute resources more fairly and to concentrate them on areas of relative deprivation and areas of high social concern and priority.

The unprecedented questioning of the public sector is coming, not surprisingly, from the Right – who are broadly in favour of private decision rather than public provision. Yet unusually the questioning is also coming from within the Left, both trade unionists and politicians. Those, like myself, who believe in the social value of public expenditure should welcome a wider, more informed, debate on public expenditure priorities. The trends and priorities of public expenditure can critically affect society. There is much good evidence that the allocation of public expenditure still owes too much to historical trends rather than present needs. Almost everything that industry produces is sold on the market; some services – those produced by the private sector – are also marketed, whereas public services such as the NHS are not sold for money but paid for out of taxation. By definition 'the marketed output of industry and services taken together must supply the total private consumption, investment and export needs of the whole nation'. In a series of articles published recently in the *Sunday Times*, it was argued that the expansion of the non-market sector which, it was claimed, took a pre-tax 60 per cent of marketed output in 1974 in place of 41½ per cent in 1961, has had the effect of reducing, not so much private consumption, but investment and exports. Against this sort of analysis the non-market sector is going to have to justify itself increasingly in view of our persistent balance of payments difficulties and poor record of economic growth.

The NHS, while of course a charge to the public sector, nevertheless meets an ever-present need which would still exist and would not be very different in size if it were suddenly to be entirely financed out of private consumption by the private sector. It is indirectly alleged by the critics of public expenditure that the NHS provided better treatment for the sick in 1961, and used fewer workers to do so.

It is no good just looking at the growth factors within the NHS without also looking at the demographic pressures on the service, the growth in demand and the sophistication of medical techniques during that period. Between 1949 and 1974, the volume of resources used by the NHS doubled and the NHS's share of GNP rose from 4 per cent to 5.3 per cent. Yet the share of UK public expenditure on goods and services (i.e. excluding transfers) rose only from 15.5 per cent to 16.2 per cent. The number of staff employed in the NHS in England increased by 75 per cent, the number of hospital staff by 86 per cent, and the number of hospital administrators and clerks by 146 per cent. Yet between 1949 and 1974 the total population for all ages increased by 6 per cent, while within this the elderly population aged over 65 increased by 35 per cent, and the number over 75 by 55 per cent. The old are far and away the heaviest users of the NHS: the proportion of all hospital beds occupied by over-65s and under-75s is about 18 per cent, and by over-75s is about 22 per cent; although the former represent only about 8 per cent of the population, and the latter only 5 per cent of the population.

Over this period of 1949-1974 overall deaths and discharges in hospital rose at the same rate as the number of hospital staff. This growth was achieved with 14 per cent fewer beds in England and the average length of in-patient stay was halved. This is a clear indication of greater efficiency within the NHS. The figures for blood, pathology, ambulance journeys and prescriptions suggest that in these respects (and one could itemise many other indicators) more was being done for each patient. In long-stay hospitals there was a differentially large increase in staff but these extra staff were badly needed to raise standards from a very low base.

Throughout 1949 to 1974 the NHS had to cope with great changes in medical technology and legislation which led to new demands, often more costly. For example, between 1967 and 1973, operations on the heart and valves rose by 71 per cent, all thoracic surgery, which is well known to be very expensive, rose by 29 per cent, the number of pacemakers inserted rose by 500 per cent, arthroplasty of the hip increased by 238 per cent, and the number of therapeutic abortions rose from about 2,000 per annum to 52,000 per annum.

It is true and worrying that waiting lists rose by 10 per cent between 1949 and 1974, but waiting lists are a poor indicator of the true pressure of demand. Like a queue for a cinema showing a good film they can indicate success as much as failure. Waiting time is a better statistic. Yet there are other factors to be considered. Surgeons now operate on cases which, either because of patients' ages or medical conditions, they would not have considered operating on 10 years ago, let alone 20 years ago. New techniques allow a wider range of patients to be treated, and the real cost of these techniques also rose dramatically between the 1950s and the mid-1970s. For example, the costs of a pathology autoanalyser rose by eight times, a head x-ray (skull unit to the EMI scanner) increased over 13 times, and increases were experienced for mobile x-ray units of five times and for radiotherapy equipment by 13 times (300 kv deep therapy units to 10 megavolt linear accelerator).

The sceptics about public expenditure cast doubt on the value of these expenditure increases. The justification is not always easy to prove, but there are objective indicators that increased NHS expenditure has achieved its aim. Between 1949 and 1974 the expectation of life at birth rose from 66.3 years to 69.1 years for men and from 71.0 years to 75.3 years for women. No one will claim that this was all due to the NHS, but it is also significant that the infant mortality rate was halved over the same period and the maternal mortality rate fell to a ninth of its former level. In short, millions of people throughout this period experienced a quantifiable increase in the quality of their lives.

It is very important that ill-informed criticisms of public expenditure are rebutted. These are serious issues which need to be fully discussed. No one should doubt the need now for constraint in public spending but equally constraint of itself has no inherent virtue. There are areas of spending which can be held back with little social damage, but some areas need higher priority than others. Open access to a free National Health Service, it can justly be claimed, actually increases people's standards of living. The insurance that the NHS gives individuals, irrespective of their financial standing or health record, is paid for in taxation but the return forms part of a social wage. People are reluctant to pay taxes but they are also reluctant to pay insurance contributions for social security, let alone private health insurance. Yet if the National Health Service is to absorb a higher percentage of GNP then the people of this country will be right to demand an efficient service. Those who work in public services must accept informed criticism and recognise the need to convince the public of the cost effectiveness of the service. The objective case for increasing expenditure on the Health Service over the next four years

**David Owen is Minister of State for Health. This article is a slightly shortened version of a speech he delivered earlier this month to the Association of Health Service Treasurers at Reading University.*

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has been accepted by the cabinet on the facts, not on the basis of emotion or the need to spend more on the NHS because of an automatic belief that such spending is a 'good thing'.

In the latest White Paper on public expenditure NHS current expenditure in England has rightly been given a relatively higher growth than many other public services because of demographic pressures. It will grow by 2.6 per cent between 1975/76 and 1976/77, and an average of 1.8 per cent per annum from 1976/77 to 1979/80. Most of this growth is, however, needed merely to stand still, and money will be tight for the NHS. The system of cash limits means that automatic inflation-proofing is over and financial discipline more essential than ever.

Growing Demands

Although the total population is forecast to remain static, the number of people aged 75 and over will rise by about 50,000 per annum (or 2 per cent per annum). It is estimated that changes in the population structure, mainly the increasing numbers of old people, will require an increase in current expenditure on hospital and community services of about 1 per cent per annum (or about £30m.) to maintain standards. Some allowance has also had to be made for the spread of new methods of treatment, the inescapable commitment to new drugs and new methods of treatment, and we have assumed that this will cost about ½ per cent per annum.

The family practitioner services are expected to grow at about 3.7 per cent a year over the next four years. The view is taken that expenditure on these services will have to respond to demand which is increasing because of changes in the population structure, the policy of shifting care from hospitals to the community services, and because of other developments such as new drugs. In 1949/50 these services took about 35 per cent of the total health budget; by 1970/71 this had fallen to about 19 per cent. The Government intends that the share of family practitioner services should arise again to about 20 per cent by 1979/80. Other elements in the growing demand for these services are rising numbers of prescriptions (2½ per cent per annum), rising real cost of prescriptions (1½ per cent per annum) and rising dental treatments (about 2 per cent per annum).

The NHS is the largest single employer in the country; it employs today about 750,000, though this figure for total NHS manpower in England is a mixture of numbers and whole-time equivalents. The growth rate in staff since the beginning of the NHS has been fairly constant. The growth rate from 1969-1974 was the same as the growth rate from 1959-1969 (2½ per cent per annum). In 1959 the NHS share of the work force was 3.5 per cent, in 1969 it was 4.5 per cent and in 1974 it was 5.1 per cent. Some quote, on the basis of projecting short-term trends, rather frightening figures, projecting forward the growth rate of the last 20 years that the whole national work force would be employed in the NHS by the year 2100. Clearly there are limits to the extent to which the NHS can continue its past employment growth.

Between 1948 and 1955 virtually no new hospital building took place. Between 1956 and 1965 six new hospitals were built (one general and five others) and two other major schemes were completed. Between 1966 and 1975, 71 new hospitals were started or completed (50 general and 21 other) and 119 other major schemes were undertaken. Expenditure on such developments formed only about two thirds of capital expenditure in a typical recent year. The rest went on small schemes.

The health capital programme for England built up steadily during the 1960s and reached a peak of £393m. in 1972/3. It has sadly but inevitably declined ever since the cuts in public expenditure started in December 1973. It will be £279m. in 1976/77 and then level off at £250m. in the years 1977/8 to 1979/80. (These figures are at 1975 survey levels and include future joint finance.) There will of course be the new power to switch from revenue into capital which will normally be 1 per cent, but can under some circumstances be as high as 2 per cent. Also, at long last the NHS will have a sensible carry-over from one year to the next. The 1 per cent margin should make the horrible rush to spend near the end of the financial year a thing of the past.

The key to the future lies in sensible and realistic planning which must ensure that revenue and capital resources are allocated on the basis of objective criteria that capital developments proceed at a pace consistent with a realistic revenue projection, and that revenue costs and manning levels are kept to an essential minimum. We must rationalise services by cutting out overlapping provisions and closing uneconomic or unessential units. Whenever possible, we must improve and adapt existing stock rather than to seek replacement as an automatic choice. Where new hospitals are required, their development must be planned in smaller but viable phases which can be expanded later when the economic situation improves. The nucleus hospital is specifically designed to meet this situation. Authorities must concentrate on capital investment which will actually reduce revenue and manpower demands, e.g. developments in primary care (health centres and clinics) and other measures which will reduce demand on in-patient services, e.g. day centres, day wards, rehabilitation units etc.

Economic Decisions

Yet whatever is done in the NHS to improve management, administration and productivity, there is one immense area of NHS cost which is hard to influence and control. Doctors themselves are economic decision makers to an extent which few people realise. In 1975/76 the average general practitioner (and his team) controlled resources (including his own time and the drugs he prescribed) worth £25,000 per annum. (There were 21,700 GPs in 1975.) So this was a total resource of £540m. In 1975/76 the average consultant, his team and nursing and professional colleagues controlled resources worth about £¾m. per annum. (If each hospital doctor is considered as a key decision maker – with nursing colleagues etc. – then each controlled resources worth about £100,000.) There were 9,600 consultants and a total of 26,400 hospital doctors in 1975.

Clinical freedom is often cited as one reason for not considering economic consequences. Doctors claim that the doctor/patient relationship only allows a doctor to decide what is best for that particular patient: some doctors believe it is for others, in particular the politicians, to make the economic decisions. Yet many doctors have been able to reduce costs without harming their patients, and it is worth looking at the results.

Overall length of stay fell from about 49 days in 1949 to about 23 days in 1974. A current estimate is that each day trimmed from the end of a typical patient's stay in an acute hospital (this is not the average day) is worth at least £9. Since lengths of stay still vary greatly from consultant to consultant and hospital to hospital, without apparent detriment to patients, there is scope for further savings here.

Saving 'Hotel' Costs

The extent to which beds can be reduced depends significantly on the average length of in-patient stay. Within the national average for acute (Type 1) hospitals (9.8 days in 1972/73) there was a wide range between different areas, from 14.7 days in the area with the longest average stay to 6.7 days in the area with the shortest. If the average length of stay could be reduced to the present median in areas where it is above it, there would be a potential annual saving of the order of £26m in 'hotel' costs. If reduction could be made to the present lower quartile the potential annual saving would be about £40m. – i.e. an amount equivalent to an increase in the present current expenditure on acute services of about 2½ per cent. If these savings are made, the resources will become available for use in other hospital services, or for the development of the acute services themselves. The savings will of course be dependent on reducing the number of beds; otherwise expenditure will increase with increased turnover.

Surgeons have increasingly been prepared to treat patients on a day-to-day basis. Whereas the number of surgical patients treated on an in-patient basis remained virtually constant between 1972 and 1974, the number of day-case surgical patients increased by 17 per cent. Treating patients on a day-case basis, with the possibilities it offers of, for example, five-day wards could lead to significant economies. One study of the consequences of treating hernias on a day-case basis suggested savings of about £30 per case in 1973 prices. Since there are about 90,000 elective hernias carried out every year the savings in current prices from the general adoption of such a policy could be as much as £4.5m. without any reduction in the quality of clinical care.

Another study has shown that home dialysis of kidney disease patients is 40 per cent less expensive than hospital dialysis. The proportion of kidney disease patients on home dialysis is higher in Britain than anywhere else in the world. In many countries national health insurance or private health insurance will only pay the costs if the patient is hospitalised and this

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reduces the willingness of patients and doctors to use home dialysis. The National Health Service is thus able to choose the most efficient mixture of home and hospital treatment without such constraints.

The spread of group practice among family doctors which has been encouraged by the NHS through financial incentives and the building of health centres has furthered the delegation of many of the simpler tasks from the general practitioner to other members of the primary care team. Many nurses would now deal with minor casualty items, removal of stitches and so on. In this way the expensively-trained doctor is allowed to concentrate on those tasks appropriate to his training.

If politicians or administrators start to make economic choices without involving doctors, doctors will face an inevitable curtailment of clinical freedom. The maintenance of clinical freedom necessitates the involvement of doctors in the process of choice and in the ordering of priorities. Since financial and other resources are not limitless and since the medical need is limitless, someone somewhere will have to choose. It is right for the doctors to demand that the politicians openly acknowledge the limitations within which medical practice has to operate. It is fair to say that in the past the politicians have not sought openly and frankly to explain to the public these limitations. This is now past – it stemmed from the Beveridge misconception, on which the NHS was founded, i.e. the myth that one had only temporarily to increase the investment in health and then, when the nation was fit, expenditure would flatten out or even drop. We now all know that demand is limitless, some growth inevitable, free and unrestrained growth impossible. Clinical freedom is a precious concept which doctors are right to fight for. They cannot maintain it by ignoring their responsibilities. George Bernard Shaw wrote: 'Freedom incurs responsibility, that is why so many men fear it.' Clinical freedom likewise means responsibility, the responsibility of involvement.

Peter Wilby

Scarborough's Cloudy Outlook

Mr Fred Mulley, the Education Secretary, gave the National Union of Teachers' conference in Scarborough something less than an intellectual *tour de force* when he addressed it last Saturday. He tackled, with a staggering lack of rigour, claims that educational standards in the schools are falling. No, asserted Mr Mulley, they were not falling. On the contrary, he believed that 'the great majority of our children get a better education today than ever before'. And that, as far as he was concerned, was that – there was apparently no need for even a shred of supporting evidence. Next, Mr Mulley turned his devastating powers of analysis and argument to the growing volume of research suggesting that increased educational expenditure fails to ameliorate social inequalities and to contribute significantly to economic growth. He met Christopher Jencks, of Harvard University, head on. His heavily researched work on education and life chances was 'a load of codswallop'. Just that, to demolish one of America's leading academics. If this is the style of argument in defence of education that Mr Mulley employs in the cabinet, it is no wonder that schools and universities bear the brunt of the expenditure cuts.

The NUT, too, for all its claims to be not just a trade union but a major pedagogical authority, fails to argue the case for education. Mr Alf Wilshire, this year's president, said, 'clearly and firmly' at the beginning of the conference that 'expenditure on education is a real investment in the future of our children and our nation'. As Mandy Rice-Davies used to say, he would, wouldn't he? Fred Jarvis, the general secretary, said that teachers must show the relevance of education to the solution of the nation's economic difficulties. So they must. There is no known NUT document that demonstrates any such connection.

Year after year, the union passes resolutions demanding smaller classes, blandly ignoring the evidence that children get on just as well, if not better, in large classes. I have no doubt that this evidence is open to dispute and I have no particular faith in the infallibility of the researchers. But it would be helpful if the NUT leaders would explain, from time to time, just why they are so convinced that the evidence should be discounted. The NUT fails itself and the nation's children with its Canute-like proclamations that education cuts must be opposed. Why? How? Which cuts particularly?

It is an old and frequently overstated truism that there is a conflict between the NUT's twin aspirations as a trade union and as a profesional association. The NUT has a claim to influence the Government's education policy just as the TUC has a claim to influence its economic strategy. But the other trade unions recognise that, in the last resort, their influence is based on industrial strength – might not right. The NUT bases its claims on the omnicompetence of its members. On Monday Mr Jarvis accused the Department of Education of not allowing teachers to make 'a positive and meaningful contribution' to educational planning and called for 'the professionalism and expertise of teachers' to be 'brought to bear' at national level. The next day, the delegates tried to bring their professionalism and expertise to bear on their leaders. The executive had issued a report on educational deprivation and disadvantage. The conference voted in favour of inserting a paragraph to the effect that, instead of teachers in difficult schools getting an extra £200-£300 a year salary in 'social priority allowances', it would be better to use the money to give the schools more teachers and better equipment. The insertion safeguarded those who already hold the allowances. It did not even commit the executive to negotiating successfully the transfer of the money, thus rendering irrelevant its argument that there is no machinery for doing so. It was simply a statement of the delegates' judgment – presumably a professional one – that the money at present spent on higher salaries for some 55,000 teachers would better achieve its purposes by being spent on other things. Yet the executive members who had drafted the report then said that, after the insertion of this single paragraph in its 16 pages, the conference ought to reject the entire thing. Why? Because it would appear that the NUT was against teachers getting more money and that would be bad for recruitment. And some delegates who had previously voted for the extra paragraph on the allowances must have been swayed, since the conference duly did as it was told and threw out the whole report. The NUT was saved, at the eleventh hour, from expressing a professional opinion on priorities in educational expenditure.

The best known flaw in the NUT's claim to professionalism – its refusal to agree that incompetent teachers exist on any significant scale – was also illustrated at Scarborough in discussions on local authority proposals to solve the problem of a teacher surplus by offering early retirement at 50 with enhanced pension rights. Like the scholastic agents in Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall* who offered the categories of outstanding school, good school and school, the NUT recognises only outstanding teachers, good teachers and teachers.

Yet, reluctant as it is to use the wisdom of professionalism, the NUT leadership plainly recognises that, in fighting the current cuts which could lead to 15,000 unemployed teachers in the autumn, it lacks the brute strength of trade unionism. The conference overwhelmingly rejected an all-out national campaign proposed by its radical fringe which, generally mustering less than 5 per cent of the votes, was weaker than in previous years. The delegates knew full well that their fellow members, newly affluent in the wake of massive salary rises two years ago, are not going to jeopardise their jobs and professional consciences for the sake of unkempt youngsters coming out of colleges of education with fancy ideas. All the union can do is to fight those authorities that are not even, as the Government intends, maintaining existing staffing standards. So its sanctions campaign – which involves teachers refusing to cover for colleagues who have been absent for more than three consecutive days – has been confined so far to four areas. It is realistic and it has already persuaded one authority to reconsider proposals to reduce its teaching force.

But it is hardly a rallying point and, for the 15,000 unemployed, its achievements will be peanuts. Like hungry sheep, British teachers and everyone concerned with the health of the nation's education look up. They may not be sure what they are looking for but, whatever it is, it was manifestly not coming from Scarborough this week.

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Jerusalem

Islam's Noble City

SINCE THE June War of 1967, Jerusalem has been under total military occupation by Israeli forces. The Holy War in Palestine is sacred to the three monotheist religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, yet during the years of Zionist control the Islamic heritage of 'The City of Peace' has been constantly under threat.

In 1969 the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem was severely damaged by a fire started by a fanatic. Excavations sanctioned by the Israeli Government now threaten many of the centuries' old Muslim buildings in the Old City.

Recently Zionist zealots have debased the sacred dignity of the Al Aqsa Mosque in the Harem al-Sharif by seeking to enter the precincts of the shrine.

Throughout February and March widespread riots by Palestinians living under Israeli occupation have sought to draw world attention to the continuing violation of the Muslim shrines, and to express support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Hundreds of Palestinian students have been arrested and detained.

In Palestine, the Holy Land, no single religion has exclusive rights to political power. For hundreds of years a land of harmony between the Jews, Christians and Muslims of Palestine, since 1947 four major wars have been fought to determine the future of the country. Peace in Palestine demands human justice and dignity for all. Towards this goal, the Palestine Liberation Organisation has proposed the creation of a secular, democratic and unitary state in Palestine, providing equal rights for both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs.

SINCE JUNE 1967 Jerusalem has been under military occupation by Israeli forces. Moslem concern about the fate of Jerusalem is based not only on political and historical factors, although the fact that it is part of Palestine and that it was ruled by Moslems for all but a century between 637 AD and 1917 is important. Jerusalem is also one of the holy cities of Islam, like Mecca and Medina.

Jerusalem is holy to Moslems for many of the same reasons that it is holy to Christians and Jews — since all three religions share a common source, and many common prophets. Abraham, John the Baptist and Jesus are all revered as prophets in Islam. To justify the claim to Jerusalem as a Jewish Holy City, the Arab descendence, through Ishmael, from Abraham (while the Jews believed they are descended from his other son, Isaac) is ignored.

Islam has never claimed that the Prophet Mohammed was the only prophet of God, rather that he was entrusted with God's final revelations through the Archangel Gabriel, as a culmination of a series of revelations. The Prophet taught reverence and respect for all the Prophets of both the Old and New Testaments, as well as biblical figures such as Adam, Noah, David and Solomon. Above all, the Prophet taught reverence towards Abraham, father of both the Jews and the Arabs, who, according to the Qu'ran, was himself the first Moslem.

The reasons why Jerusalem is seen as a Holy City by Jews are equally shared by the world's Moslems.

In Islam, however, there are particular reasons for the holiness of the city, known to Moslems as Al Quds ash-Sharif — the Holy and Noble City. During the life of the Prophet, he was summoned by God, through the Archangel Gabriel, from Mecca to Jerusalem, being carried by the winged mare, al-Buraq, to the holy rock on top of Mount Moriah, traditionally the place where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son to God. From there, Moslems believe, he ascended through various stages of Heaven, meeting and praying with various prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, until he appeared before the throne of God in the Seventh Heaven. He then returned to Mount Moriah and to Mecca.

During the early days of Islam, Moslems prayed towards Jerusalem, giving it the name Ula al-Qiblatain, first of the two Qiblas, or 'directions', the second being Mecca.

The holiness of the city meant that from the very beginning of Islam Moslems wished to exercise their spiritual rights in the city. In 637, the armies of Caliph Omar encamped outside its walls, while the Byzantine rulers debated whether or not to surrender. Eventually, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Sophronius, announced that he would surrender the city — but only to Omar in person — and in one of the great scenes of Moslem history, the Caliph, with his clothes dusty and torn from a ride from Damascus, entered the city alone, except for a servant, to receive the surrender, without bloodshed and in peace.

The Caliph, though a victorious conqueror, displayed on that occasion the generosity towards Christians and towards the city itself that was to characterise his later rule. Asked by the Patriarch if he would like to join in prayers in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Caliph declined, saying that to do so might later

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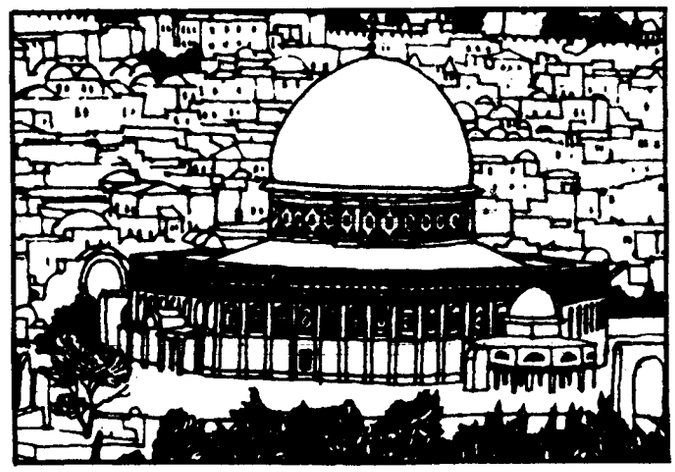
encourage his followers to convert the church into a Mosque. Instead he prayed outside, in a place commemorated today by the tenth century Mosque of Omar. He then asked the Patriarch to show him the site of the Prophet's ascent into Heaven, and seeing that the area was covered with debris, he himself began the task of clearing the summit. It is today the focus of the 34 acre compound in the south-east corner of the Holy City, known as al-Haram ash-Sharif, the Noble Sanctuary. Omar also ordered that a simple wooden mosque should be built near the south western corner of the sanctuary, near the great wall where, according to tradition, the Prophet had tethered al-Buraq.

The terms granted by the Caliph Omar to the Byzantine Christian occupants of the Holy City were magnanimous in the extreme — marking the words of an English historian, John Gray, 'less of a treaty imposed by a conqueror than a guarantee by a victorious faith confident in its inherent strength, and conscious of its responsibilities'.

'Bismallah al-Rahman al-Rahim, In the name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate', the treaty ran in part, 'this is the covenant which Omar Ibn al-Khattab, the servant of Allah, the Commander of the Faithful, grants to the people of Aelia, the Holy House'. (Jerusalem was then known by its Roman name of Aelia Capitolina). 'He grants them security of their lives, their possessions, their churches and crosses. They shall have freedom of religion and none shall be molested unless they rise up in a body. They shall pay a tax instead of military service, and those who leave the city shall be safeguarded until they reach their destination.'

With the consolidation of their rule, the Moslems built two of Islam's most beautiful, and most famous, Mosques — the Dome of the Rock, established during the reign of Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, which encloses the top of the rock from which the Prophet ascended, and al-Aqsa, near the site of Omar's earlier wooden mosque. At the same time, however, the religious rites of the Christian popula-



tion continued to be guaranteed and Jerusalem, holy to three religions, became a place of co-existence between them.

That era of tolerance was not to disappear until the capture of the Holy City by the Crusaders in 1099. In the name of Western Christian civilisation, they massacred all but a few of the city's Moslem defenders, burnt the small Jewish community in its synagogue, and slaughtered large numbers of Arab and Greek Orthodox Christians. The Moslem shrines were desecrated — the Dome of the Rock being converted into a church named the Templum Domini, and al-Aqsa becoming the Templum Solomonis, and used as the headquarters of the Knights Templar.

It was not until the city was liberated by Saladin in 1187 that the Holy City again became a centre of religious tolerance. Saladin removed the crosses from the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa, placing a special cedarwood pulpit in the latter, while leaving all Christian shrines intact. He spared the lives of the Crusader defenders of the city, and once again offered the protection of 'The security of Islam' to all those who sought it.

Over the next seven hundred years, Moslem rulers, Arabs, Mamlukes, Ottomans, preserved Saladin's tradition of tolerance, moving at the same time to provide a guarantee for the upkeep of al-Haram ash-Sharif. The Mamlukes for example, purchased substantial amounts of property in the city, especially in the Magharibah quarter west of the sanctuary, and through the establishment of sacred trusts — Waqfs — dedicated their income to the upkeep of the holy places, and to establish, maintain and operate Moslem schools, religious institutes, hospices for pilgrims, and kitchens for the poor. These institutions, plus the homes and mosques of the devout, clustered in the shadow of the Noble Sanctuary, became an integral part of the Moslem religious presence in the Holy City.

Around the Sanctuary are three domes built by Moslem Caliphs — the Dome of Moses, the Dome of Solomon, the Dome of Gabriel. Around the edge of the main platform within the Sanctuary are a series of arches, the mawazeen, from which, tradition says, the balance scales will hang on Judgement Day. And across the valley to the east, on the Mount of Olives, a small mosque marks the spot where Jesus ascended into Heaven.

The Holy City and its heart, the Noble Sanctuary, are abundant proof not only of the importance of the city to all Moslems, but also express Moslem respect for the prophets of Judaism and Christianity. Revering all prophets, Islam believes Jerusalem to be part of its very existence.

Today, with its occupation by the Zionist settlers, Moslems from all over the world no longer have the ability to worship freely, as they have done for hundreds of years, in the Dome of the Rock, above which Abraham, Jesus and Mohammed knelt in prayer. Moreover, the Israeli authorities have embarked on a policy of desecration of the Holy City not only by defacing its beauty with their high-rise tower blocks to the east of the City, but by — literally — undermining its very sanctity. In 1969, al-Aqsa was severely damaged by fire, and the pulpit of Saladin was burned. Around the walls of the Noble Sanctuary, archaeological excavations, encouraged by Zionist zealots, have weakened the foundations of many of the ancient Waqf buildings, and now threaten the very wall and the Noble Sanctuary itself. Some Zionists have called openly for the destruction of the Moslem shrines, so that what they believe to be the ruins of the wall of the ancient Jewish temple can be excavated.

Officially, the Israeli Government has not extended its support to these demands, but in practice the programme of excavation they are encouraging is having, slowly but precisely, the effect that the zealots want. Several Moslem buildings, hundreds of years old, have been reduced to a dangerous condition as a result of cracks in their foundations and walls, and now a long underground tunnel is planned by the authorities to pursue the excavation programme.

International condemnation of Israeli building and excavation policies in Jerusalem have done nothing to deter them. Instead, ignoring the criticisms of UNESCO and other cultural bodies, the Israelis have proceeded with their programme, steadily demolishing more and more of the Old City, and driving out Palestinians whose families have lived for centuries close to the shrines of the Holy City.

When Western nations express surprise at the determination of the Moslems of the world, not only Arab Moslems, to recover the right to pray freely in Jerusalem, their surprise is revealing an ignorance as regrettable as it is pitiful. It is, perhaps, partly due to the long hostility felt by Western Christianity — though not Eastern Christianity — for Islam, but today there is no excuse for it to continue.

All Moslems have a duty to ensure the return of the city to those who will practise the religious tolerance and respect of Caliph Omar and Saladin, an aspiration which is increasingly endorsed by members of the United Nations and humanitarians throughout the world.

"Surely unto God all things return home"—

The Holy Qor'an XLII.

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Diary of a Deadbeat

☐ The prospect of another Royal Jubilee led me to turn up the cuttings relating to a row about the monarchy that I was involved in two decades ago. They seemed so dim and far away that I could scarcely believe they concerned something that happened to me. The row turned on an article I wrote for the now defunct *Saturday Evening Post* which was a rehash of one that had already appeared in the NEW STATESMAN called 'Royal Soap Opera'. The latter aroused little comment, but the former stirred up a terrific furore. Such an article nowadays would scarcely cause a ripple anywhere in the world, except perhaps in the columns of the German magazine *Stern*, and *France Dimanche*, the only two publications in which public interest in our royal family can be said to be truly flourishing. The essential point I made was that, as the monarchy no longer exercised any power, and only a rapidly dwindling influence, the incumbent must be seen as merely a ceremonial Head of State whose utility lay in saving us the expense and razmataz of a presidential election every few years. In these circumstances, to accord the incumbent star billing was unfair to the monarch concerned, and could only add to the fantasy which afflicts, and ultimately destroys, nations like ours in decline. Subsequent developments, I should say, have borne out my contention, fostering neither the notion of the abolition of the monarchy as a necessary step in the achievement of a social revolution, nor that of the monarchy as a last-ditch defence against social revolution.

☐ To find oneself in disgrace, as I did, is a highly educative process. Suddenly one sees just how easily the flock is induced to chase after an errant sheep; how essentially fraudulent and manipulable are all arrangements for defending individual rights, like the law, the press, public opinion, and how the great majority of individuals instinctively withdraw themselves from contact with anyone in disgrace. I remember how in Moscow the first intimation that one of the top *apparat*-men had run into trouble was to see empty chairs on each side of him at a party get-together. In disgrace there are always empty chairs, I discovered. In retrospect two incidents stand out. Walking along the front at Brighton, a man coming in the opposite direction stopped and deliberately spat at me. He hurried away, so I have only a vague impression of a somewhat nondescript person in an overcoat and cap. Then in the lobby of the Midland Hotel in Manchester a stranger came up to me, shook my hand and said: 'Never forget that only dead fish swim with the stream.' He, too, hurried away, but his words have lingered in my mind. The moral would seem to be that law-and-order is a necessary con-trick, and the more durable seen as such rather than as divinely ordained and sponsored. Furthermore, that the one fatal course is to take any form of earthly power seriously, whether in exercising it, or in aspiring to exercise it, or in suffering the consequences of its exercise.

☐ To illustrate a magazine feature a photo was required of me looking at where I expect to be buried. The project rather appealed to me; death is such a wonderful and beautiful thing, and I remembered the painting of John Donne in his shroud. The photographer duly arrived, and we went together to the churchyard where my father is buried. I've long had my eye on an adjoining plot under a tree. It happened to be a bright spring morning, and while the photographer was setting up I wandered around spelling out the names and inscriptions on the tombstones. Quite a number of the names I knew, and could give a body and a voice to them. The churchyard had a somewhat neglected air, but was glowing with daffodils; the church, too, looked unused. It stands on the top of a little hill with farmland all round. In times past I've often stood there myself, wondering about this and that. The photographer signalled that he was ready, and I duly disposed of myself as required while he click-clicked away. Camera work, I reflected, belongs so essentially to our time – the exact image that is totally false, the lasting record that does not last; whereas the scene itself, the almost abandoned church, the graves in disarray, belongs to an already vanished past. Still, something of it will remain; the other is written on water.

☐ This is a great time for ideological acrobatics, of which I have long been an ardent but unsystematic collector. Trendy clergymen are great providers, and I picked up a good item from the recently installed Bishop of Bristol who is reported as claiming that D. H. Lawrence and the Apostle Paul spoke with one voice on the subject of sex. I imagined a lost Epistle to the Corinthians extolling Mellors as the very pattern of Christian *mores*. A mere vicar produced a more artless variant on the same theme when he spoke lyrically of Soho strippers as 'like beautiful music or a vintage wine'. Serious collectors tend to turn up their noses at the World Council of Churches as being too easy – like fly-fishers invited to drop a bent pin in a pond infested with tiddlers. All the same, I cherish the memory of an Anglican canon who at a WCC meeting argued that, as the Passion was a scene of violence, it may be considered as commending its use. Here again one envisages an additional Station of the Cross showing Christ in Berrigan-style parachutist rig holding a time-bomb.

☐ My own richest find came last year when I went to the USSR to do the commentary for a TV programme on Dostoevsky. To fit *The Devils*, not to mention Dostoevsky's famous speech on the occasion of the unveiling of the Pushkin monument in Moscow, into the canon of Soviet orthodoxy required acrobatics of a very high order indeed – comparable, say, to discerning strong Jansenist or Trappist sympathies in Casanova's *Memoirs*. Nonetheless our Soviet mentors went to it with a will, not even faltering over Dostoevsky's passionate avowal of faith in the monarchy and the Orthodox Church. The impression I formed was that Dostoevsky meant more to them than did Marxist-Leninist dialectics. When I was first in the USSR, in 1932, all glory and power resided in a foursome, much on display, consisting of Lenin, Stalin, Marx and Engels. Then Engels was dropped, and there was a troika; then Stalin was dropped, leaving a pair. Now Marx has gone, and only Lenin remains. Solzhenitsyn says there are no Marxists in the USSR, and that Marxism has become a joke, in which case we may expect the final jettisoning of Marxism there to coincide with a resolution in its favour at the synod of the Anglican Church and the issuing of a papal encyclical in the same sense – *De necessitate Marxismi.*

☐ I have had occasion recently to take stock of a friendship now of some 45 years' standing which has survived the ever widening divergence of our ways, thoughts and hopes. Almost everything I say and do and write is abhorrent to my friend, and vice versa. Yet our mutual affection remains intact. To quote from a recent letter: 'I suppose no outside observer would appreciate the deep ties of affection that unite you and me. If you were someone else you would be deplorable to me; as it is, you can do no wrong in my eyes.' I echo the sentiment, and am happy to put it on record that, in a time of conflict and fanaticism, of crazy dogmatism and every kind of intolerance, such a friendship can still exist and flourish. Let me add that wild horses would not induce me to identify my friend. That would spoil everything.

Malcolm Muggeridge

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The beautiful gardens at Mereworth Castle, near Maidstone, are to be open on Sunday 2 May, by permission of His Excellency Mohamed Mahdi Al Tajir, who has agreed to allow a floral day to be held there in aid of a newly formed branch of the Samaritans – the Maidstone and Weald. – *Kentish Times* (M. Berg)

☐ Being a DJ is a risky business – in contrast with mining, for example, where a miner is assured of a job in the pits for life – and it merits in consequence a high rate of pay. Not anyone could do it, he says. Anyone can be a miner. – *Coal News* (Tony Blackburn)

☐ A plan by a man, aged 59, to have himself crucified on Easter Saturday before a crowd of 200 was attacked yesterday. Mr Eddie Shingler, an unemployed labourer and former stuntman, of Alfreton Road, Radford, Nottingham, intends to have 7-inch steel spikes hammered into the palms of both hands and feet. Spectators are asked to pay £3 to see the spikes going in, and 50p to see him hanging on a cross. – *Guardian* (I. Morgan)

☐ As well as the Duke's Wellington boots, visitors will also be able to see his false teeth on display in a silver box and his monogrammed nightcap. – *Eastern Evening News* (Dr Constance Roberts)

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Mervyn Jones

At the National

We went to the new National Theatre, in the first place, just to admire the architecture. Admirable it is. But while we were there, we asked if there were any seats for *John Gabriel Borkman*, and easily purchased vouchers for the circle for an evening a week and a half ahead. At the Old Vic, for an Ibsen or Chekhov production with Peggy Ashcroft and Ralph Richardson in the cast, you'd have to show up when the box-office opened on the first Monday of a booking period and queue for an hour. Maybe it's merely that people aren't going out so much, what with inflation and bombs. But maybe it's the voucher system.

You can buy a voucher for £2.35 (stalls and circle the same) and exchange it for a seat ticket on the night of the performance, from 5.45 to 7.45, when the curtain rises. Or you can pay £4.35 when you do your advance booking and get your numbered seat right away. This will appeal to the wealthy, or to tourists who find £4.35 reasonable by Broadway standards; it's a necessity for people who can't reach the theatre until almost curtain time, and parties of six who won't enjoy the evening unless they sit together. Jeanne and I settled for vouchers. The young lady at the desk had been explaining the system to a baffled customer and was relieved that we'd heard about it already. I don't envy her explaining it all summer to Finns and Japanese. 'It won't last,' she said brightly.

When the evening came, I arrived at 6.30 and exchanged my vouchers for seats in row E. 'Will that be all right?' the man at the desk (different desk, of course) asked defensively. I said I'd rather have row A, but I was only joking. 'You'll be sitting next to people who paid £4.35,' he informed me. I said it was lucky I'd put on a tie.

Down in the foyer it was a bit like an airport lounge. There are seats – in the daytime, it looks like plenty of seats – but so many people were in the voucher class that I couldn't get one. I stood for a while listening to the group playing 17th-century English music (I think) near the main doors. These free concerts are the best of the National Theatre's ideas. Then I walked over to the bookstall. You could buy books, mostly plays, and you could also buy a programme, which is an improvement on fumbling for change while you're going into the theatre itself.

I bought a programme. The free cast lists offered at the Old Vic haven't survived. The programme costs 25p (15p is now usual in the West End) and although it had some information about Ibsen's life and so forth, it was a lot thinner and less interesting than the programme – half a crown when I last bought one – that used to be optional at the Old Vic.

The foyer has small lights in the high roof, and strips of brilliant light near the floor. It was great for gazing at ankles, which can't have attracted so much attention since Victorian times. The people on the seats couldn't read their programmes or evening papers. I stood and read, positioning myself carefully under a light.

Jeanne arrived at seven. We don't generally eat before the theatre, but as voucher victims we were more or less bound to do that, or else sozzle ourselves at the bar. Say what you like about the voucher system, it's going to do a lot for the National Theatre's catering profits – if it lasts. We'd thought of getting a quick pizza at the Italian restaurant opposite Waterloo Station, but it was raining, so we stuck to the National and went up two flights of stairs to the Lyttelton Buffet.

The buffet, despite its name, isn't a buffet. You find a table and wait for a waitress to take your order. The waitress who served us was brisk and efficient, considering the number of customers, but we hadn't got our bill when the loudspeakers ordered us to take our seats. Others were in the same situation, and we couldn't have paid in time to reach our seats before the play began. Our waitress said yes, sure, we could pay in the interval. Which we did, but some wouldn't. That might cut down the profits.

The menu consisted entirely of salads. An unexciting, rather limp chicken salad cost £1.50. Airports, for instance, give you a choice between a restaurant where you can get a full hot meal with waitress service, and a cafeteria where you can get a salad fairly cheap. Here, what with the kerfuffle over the bill and remembering to tip when I finally paid it, I felt that I'd had all the formalities of a dinner without getting the dinner. Next time I'll bring sandwiches and eat them in the foyer. I shan't actually be able to see them, but it seems the best option.

So we took our seats, next to the couple who were in the £4.35 class. They looked as though they came from Shepton Mallet. We could see the stage perfectly. The rationale of the voucher system is that the sightlines are excellent, which they are, and you can see equally well wherever you sit. The logic of this would be to do away with numbered seats altogether and let people find seats as in a cinema, and in view of the democratic image to which the National aspires – 'The new National Theatre is Yours,' say the posters – there's much to be said for the idea. But, however good the sight-lines are, either you are near the stage or you're farther away. A play is not a film, and it counts for a good deal to be able to make out the expression on an actor's face, especially in proscenium plays of the Ibsen type in which most of the scenes are tête-à-tête conversations. I have been prepared to pay £3 for this privilege, the going rate at the Aldwych or in the West End. But not £4.35.

Out into the night, with the rain beating up across the expanse of the Thames. The National Theatre badly needs an entrance on the inland side; but they haven't thought of that in 25 years at the Festival Hall, so I don't suppose they will here. It's a long way from the tube, and one yearns for an underground passage like the one between South Kensington station and the museums.

John Gabriel Borkman was fine, I thought, and I'm sure I'll see many first-class productions at the National. But I don't expect to enjoy going there as I enjoyed going to the Old Vic. It may be yours, whoever 'you' are. It isn't mine.

First Person

Arthur Marshall

Royal Mail

19 Tregunter Crescent, W8

Your Majesty,

After much hesitation I am taking the liberty of writing to you to ask a favour on behalf of my daughter, Penelope. Young Penny, a well-developed 12-year-old, has recently 'taken up' tennis and has visions of becoming a second Christine Truman! There are no courts at her Comprehensive, though promised, and she 'makes do' in the park.

On my way to and from work (at the Army and Navy Stores) my bus takes me between Victoria and Hyde Park Corner and past the Palace gardens. These have always intrigued me and from the top of the bus one gets a lovely view. With the leaves off the trees, your hard tennis court becomes very clear. It looks in perfect condition, with everything at the ready and the net up, but I have never seen anyone playing on it. Would it be possible, I wonder, for my Penny to make use of it?

Yours sincerely,
Pamela Johnston

From the Lady Jean Sidebotham
Buckingham Palace, SW1

Dear Mrs Johnston,

Her Majesty has commanded me to answer your letter and to say that she regrets that she does not feel able at the present time to agree to your request.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Sidebotham
Lady-in-Waiting to Her Majesty

Dear Lady Sidebotham,

There seems to have been some misunderstanding. I was not expecting that Her Majesty would be able to play with Penny, she is clearly much too busy. My daughter would bring along one of her friends. Of course, if Her Majesty would care for a knock-up during a slack time in state affairs, that would be a marvellous bonus!

Penny and her friend would bring their own tennis balls. Their best days would be Tuesday or Friday about 2.30 p.m. They are both very excited at the possibility.

Yours sincerely,
Pamela Johnston

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Dear Mrs Johnston,
Your further letter has been considered and it is regretted that no exception can be made in this case.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Sidebotham

20 Tregunter Crescent, W8

Dear Queen,
My good friend and neighbour, Mrs Johnston, has been telling me how you are planning to be throwing open your tennis courts to youngsters. This is being great good news. My daughter, Helga, 'caught the tennis bog' while staying with her Onkel Heinrich in Hanover last summer and would also like to 'join up' with the group.

Hullo!
Gertrud Bauscher

Dear Mrs Bauscher,
Her Majesty has commanded me to answer your letter and to say that she is sorry that you have been misinformed and that the tennis court cannot be liberated for public use.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Sidebotham

Dear Lady Sidebotham,
I understand that Mrs Bauscher has written – it was foolish of me to let her into our little secret. Of course if you extend the invitation to everybody the court would become impossibly overcrowded and this is the last thing we want. When would it be convenient for the children to start to play?

Yours sincerely,
Pamela Johnston

Dear Mrs Johnston,
I would very much like to be more helpful but it will be clear to you that the question of security is, in these sad days, of paramount importance and this, if for no other reason, prevents us giving your daughter access to the Palace grounds.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Sidebotham

Dear Lady Sidebotham,
You need have no fear about security. Penny knows better than to damage any trees or shrubs in the garden. We have always brought her up to respect other people's property. Did I spot a side-door to the Palace which the children could use? It's in that wall near to where dear old Gorringes used to be. If the children were to use this there would be less chance of outsiders getting to know what was going on. They would be careful to stick to the path once inside the Palace grounds. What about next Friday?

Yours sincerely,
Pamela Johnston

Dear Lady Sidebotham,
I am not understanding why Helga's tickets for the court have not come through. Penny Johnston is cock-a-hop all over the Crescent and nothing for Helga! Is this being British Justice?

Hullo!
Gertrud Bauscher

Dear Mrs Bauscher,
I am afraid that you are under a misapprehension. No tickets are being issued to anybody for Her Majesty's hard tennis court. The question of security is, these sad days, of paramount importance.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Sidebotham

Dear Lady Sidebotham,
We Germans are not fearful persons. We mind little of security. A true German is as secure on tennis-court as on battlefield. Helga fears nothing. She has her karate medal and can protect herself.

Hullo!
Gertrud Bauscher

Dear Lady Sidebotham,
I wonder if you can have received my last letter. The children are 'all set' – and no news! Next week will be half-term and an ideal moment for the children's first visit. Please let me know soon.

Yours sincerely,
Pamela Johnston

From the Hon. Mrs J. C. B. Tynte
Buckingham Palace, SW1

Dear Mrs Johnston,
Lady Jean is away from duty at the moment with a complete nervous breakdown and in her absence I am dealing with her letters. As the volume of incoming correspondence is always very great, it is not the Palace practice to retain many letters from the public, or our answers to them, and so I am in some doubt about the 'first visit' to which you refer. Could you please explain?

Yours sincerely,
Muriel Tynte
Lady-in-Waiting to Her Majesty

Dear Mrs Tynte,
Certainly. My daughter, Penelope, has recently 'taken up' tennis . . .

Letters to the Editor

The Sacrifice of Alex Lyon

Sir, The sacking of Alex Lyon as Minister of State at the Home Office confirms your editorial fears resulting from Mr Callaghan's past record on race and immigration. The friends of Messrs Callaghan and Jenkins have claimed that the sacking was the result, not of policy differences, but of Mr Lyon being 'a bad departmental minister'.

From my own involvement in representations to the Home Office as secretary of this group, as a member of relevant Labour Party policy groups, and through having been coincidentally present in Bangladesh when Mr Lyon visited that country as part of his scrutiny of procedures for the admission of the dependants of immigrants, I cannot believe that this is the case.

Mr Lyon's major contributions were in two areas. First, he not only examined individual immigration cases with great care and humanity, but also fought, largely without Roy Jenkins's backing and therefore unsuccessfully, to get improvements in the immigration rules and procedures. Secondly, alone in the Home Office, he understood that, although law against overt acts of racial discrimination is essential, the more important half of a domestic race relations strategy is the funding of effective local programmes to meet the special needs of racial minorities and of multiracial deprived areas. He succeeded in getting this acknowledged in the Racial Discrimination White Paper, but the possibility of such funding seems so far to have been a casualty of Mr Jenkins's loyalty to the public expenditure cuts.

It was these policy differences which brought Alex Lyon into conflict with Home Office civil servants and Roy Jenkins. If indeed he had been a bad minister then his successor might have been expected to be a man or woman with an equal record of commitment and understanding in the field of race relations. Since this is not the case, one must wonder whether a bad departmental minister at the Home Office is not automatically regarded as one who has such a commitment.

IAN MARTIN
Secretary
ASTMS Community Relations Group
43a St Albans Road
Ilford, Essex

The Treason of Clerisy

Sir, I would agree with George Gale (NS 16 April) that we should question the message of Solzhenitsyn rather than accept his every word as unquestionable truth. However, Mr Gale has demonstrated in his article that he has missed the crux of the argument – whether there are certain absolute truths which must be placed above all practical considerations including life itself. All the rest is irrevelant and Mr Gale belittles both Solzhenitsyn and himself by concentrating on peripheral issues. His article would have been valuable had he chosen to argue for pragmatism against idealism instead of assuming his case to be proved ('But surely the first duty of the West is to survive.').

The extent of his misunderstanding is demonstrated by his separation of moral and political questions; Solzhenitsyn argues that it is because of this readiness to draw the distinction that the West is now in danger. To take Mr Gale's own example, it is because US intervention in Vietnam was unpopular that they were forced to concede their position – we do not have the moral strength to support our political postures.

CHARLES LAURIE
South Hinksey
Oxford

Sir, May an American reader thank George Gale (NS 16 April) for saying what many other Westerners must also have felt in reaction to the BBC's recent double dose of Solzhenitsyn? (And as if the first exposure hadn't been 'enough about penguins', they felt obliged to collect pundits – one of them imported – to tell us how to interpret penguin behaviour the second time around.)

If it is a truism to say that an expectation nurtured and cherished in a vacuum (the West as 'seen' by Solzhenitsyn from the Gulag) is bound to be exaggerated, it is a cliché to say that the expectation is sure to be better than – certainly different from – the reality (the West as 'seen' by Solzhenitsyn from the West). But truisms and clichés are fundamentally true, and thus Mr Gale is correct to point out that what is so troubling about Solzhenitsyn is not that he embodies the larger-than-life heroism of the survivor, and not even that he addresses us from a prophetic summit few have been able to reach, let alone see, but that the very discrete experience that took him there should be found by so many to be a paradigm, a warning and, in fact, an excuse.

Hair shirts are uncomfortable garments, and beds of nails make for restless sleep. Surely we have saints and fakirs enough of our own to

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contend with, and surely our examples – like our warnings and excuses – must come from within if they are to come at all.

SUSAN H. LLEWELLYN

41 Terenure Road West
Dublin

Left and the Environment

Sir, In his excellent article 'The Left and the Environment', (NS 16 April), Jeremy Bugler overlooked one of the strongest cases against 'growthmania'; that growth, measured in the way it is as the increase in real GNP from one year to the next, is purely quantitative. It merely tells us that the sums of incomes, and of expenditure, rose – it gives no indication of the nature of the increase.

As Barbara Ward pointed out in *Only One Earth*, national income 'makes no subtraction for days lost or lungs congested, but includes doctors' earnings for putting the troubles right'. As the cost to, say, the miner and his family is neglected, but not the cost of sorting him out, it is implied by the national income accounts that making people ill, and streets and beaches dirtier, is a certain recipe for growth. Again, the effect of a policy to renovate houses rather than demolish and rebuild would be to reduce national income, growth, and investment, as far as the accounts were concerned. Yet our housing stock, certainly in rural areas, and probably also in cities, would undoubtedly benefit. It only goes to show that Disraeli was right about statistics.

ANDREW CURRY

Emmanuel College
Cambridge

Labour's Advisers

Sir, Crucifer's comments (NS 9 April) on political advisers ('the present liquorice all-sorts of academics-on-the-make' etc.) were not only unpleasant and undeserved; they also display an incredible ignorance about how party-government business is conducted.

The truth of the matter is that the advisers have provided an invaluable link between party and government over the past two years – both in terms of day-to-day issues, and in our longer-term policy development. Indeed, precisely because the advisers have been so helpful to us, they have not infrequently incurred the displeasure of the Whitehall bureaucracy. Our only regret at Transport House is that there are not more political advisers, and more ministers willing to accept them.

GEOFF BISH
Research Secretary

The Labour Party
Transport House
Smith Square, SW1

Parable for Jenkins

Sir, Phillip Whitehead's article (NS 16 April) on Roy Jenkins made me reflect on the similarity between Jenkins's position in 1976 and Adlai Stevenson's in 1960. The Home Secretary, like Stevenson, had sought election as chief executive and been defeated. Jenkins's national 'constituency' was similar to Stevenson's. Both men commanded a disproportionately large amount of support among what might be called the informed elite. Both were urbane. Both were intellectuals, by which I mean they were interested in abstract ideas for their own sake. Both had considerable reputations abroad. (One is reminded of Stevenson's comment: 'I always carried Britain and France, but never the United States'.)

Their qualities appeared to many – not least the informed elite – to make Stevenson and Jenkins obvious choices for appointment as Secretary of State and Foreign Secretary, and both men strongly desired these appointments. For various reasons, not entirely to their credit it would appear, John Kennedy and James Callaghan denied them these appointments. Instead, lesser avenues for the utilisation of their talents in international affairs were found – Stevenson as US delegate to the United Nations and Jenkins as President of the EEC Commission. While Stevenson appeared to have little option but to go to the UN if he wished to remain in public life, Jenkins is clearly in a stronger position and, as Whitehead suggests, has a real choice. One hopes that, whichever way Jenkins decides to go, his next period will be more rewarding than Stevenson's at the UN.

MALCOLM SHAW
Senior Lecturer

Department of Politics
University of Exeter

Miracle Cures

Sir, It seems to me that the time has almost come to close down the debate between my friend, Nicolas Walter, and myself. (It was a pleasure to me to rediscover in him an old pupil for whom I have warm regard and to renew contact with him after some 20 years.) Both of us have made our positions clear and neither of us is likely to convince the other. His last letter (NS 16 April) makes clear, I think, our different presuppositions. He holds that anything out of the course of nature is impossible, I that anything not self-contradictory, e.g. that anything should exist and not exist at the same time, is possible. So my only criterion for the truth or otherwise of abnormal phenomena is evidence.

I must, however, say that I am surprised that Nicolas Walter should include in his list of 'rare and unexpected' occurrences eclipses, which have been predicted with increasing accuracy from Babylonian times onwards. Nor are his other instances all unpredictable or in some cases rare. And when he refers with some hauteur to the 'method' of Aquinas, I think he is falling into the widespread habit of underestimating the contribution of the Middle Ages to natural science. Aquinas's master, Albert the Great, wrote voluminously on it, stressed the importance of observation and experiment and was not afraid to contradict some Aristotelian dicta. In the 14th century the birth of the 'impetus' theory opened the way to the supersession of Aristotelian physics, a process only temporarily held up by the undue reverence of some Renaissance pundits for the ancients whose literary style they idolised and were inclined to think infallible.

I do not think that either Newton or Hume are really useful allies for Mr Walter. The former was a believer of a rather naïve sort, to judge from his attempts to elucidate Biblical prophecies, while Hume maintained a theory of causality which, taken by itself, would rob science of predictive power.

Finally I do not deny that a theodicy is needed if one believes that God can work healing miracles, as I have tried to show in my reply to Gerald Samuel (NS 16 April). I do not pretend that this is easy; fully to justify the ways of God to man one would need to be God. But I believe that the Christian revelation supplies clues to it. And here I personally am willing to leave things, although if Nicolas Walter would like to reply further I shall be only too pleased to continue until your editorial axe falls on us both.

THOMAS M. PARKER

36 Chalfont Road
Oxford

Remembering the General Strike

Sir, I am sorry, though not surprised, that Arthur Marshall (NS 9 April) should have criticised the GLC's contribution of £10,000 towards an exhibition to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the General Strike.

The anniversary will not be celebrated, as he incorrectly stated. There is nothing to celebrate, but as an event in British working class history, it is well worthy of commemoration. £10,000 is slight in comparison with the money the GLC rightly spends on exhibitions and general support for cultural institutions and events. Much of the drama in the General Strike centred on London, and from our own archives the Council will be contributing a number of important items. Hopefully, the exhibition due to be held in Covent Garden during July will lead to the discovery and preservation of valuable social records from 1926. Since much working-class history is preserved in the minds of those who took part rather than in books, the organisers will be arranging interviews with visitors who have personal recollections of the strike. The tapes thus produced should prove valuable additions to our knowledge of events in 1926.

The exhibition itself is being organised by Mr John Gorman, and if any NS readers have material which may be of use, perhaps they would contact Mr Gorman at: Sutton House, Homerton High Street, London E9.

TONY BANKS
Chairman

General Purposes Committee
Greater London Council
County Hall, SE1

Sir, Arthur Marshall asks, what could be 'dottier' than the GLC spending £10.000 to celebrate the General Strike. The short answer is, the millions of pounds which will be spent next year on a royal anniversary. An event which I defy even Arthur Marshall to equate as being of comparable social significance to the General Strike, and an event to which the GLC are expected to contribute a sum vastly in excess of £10,000.

JOHN GORMAN
Exhibition Organiser

Sutton House
Homerton High Street, E9

On the Record

Sir, In David Caute's review of Dr Rowse's reminiscences (NS 16 April) there is a sentence about G. D. H. Cole's *World of Labour* which runs: 'But who remembers dear Douglas's work today?' As the sentence is in quotes, it seems that it must be ascribed to Dr Rowse rather than Mr Caute – but will you allow me to inform both of them that *The World of Labour* (first published in 1913) has quite recently been reprinted, along with *Self-Government in Industry*, *Workshop Organisation*, and other of G. B. H. Cole's writings? I think it is only reasonable to put these facts on record.

MARGARET COLE

4 Ashdown
Cliveden Court
London W13

Wrong Date

Sir, The author of your profile of Queen Elizabeth writes that 'when she came to the throne . . . the latest shocking novel was Graham Green's *The Power and the Glory*'. My novel was published in 1940 and the Queen came to the throne in 1952. The wise and patronising style in which the profile is written recalls to mind the article by Mr Paul Johnson in the Sixties when he advised the Queen on the subject of Prince Charles's education. Perhaps the mistake in dates makes my attribution unlikely but then I have always regarded Mr Johnson the historian, as the NEW STATESMAN's reply to Lady Antonia Fraser.

GRAHAM GREENE

Antibes
France

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BOOKS & ARTS

A. S. Byatt

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Letters Home by SYLVIA PLATH *Faber* £6.75

'The Disquieting Muses' offers a clue to the relationship between the fine and terrible poet of *Ariel* and the Sylvia Plath whose *Letters Home* are now edited by her mother. The poem is addressed to a story-telling mother whose witches 'always, always/ Got baked into gingerbread.' It inquires whether she saw, or said spells against, the three ladies like darning eggs who watched the child nightly, 'mouthless, eyeless, with stitched bald head'. The mother praised the child's music: the child, watched by the bald muses, knew her touch to be 'oddly wooden'. The mother 'cried and cried' when the child, immobilised at a school concert, stood heavy in her twinkle-dress. In a hurricane the mother cheered the children by chanting rhymes: 'Thor is angry: we don't care.' Those ladies burst the windows. The mother floats off, calling, on a green balloon amongst flowers and unreal bluebirds. The child remains with the now stony ladies. 'But,' she promises, 'no frown of mine will betray the company I keep.' Here is the ambivalent power of the archetypes of magic tale: control of terror, creation of terror. Here is one relationship between bright art and appalling reality. Here is a child frightened permanently by a real and imagined horror she believes her mother cannot or will not acknowledge.

Aurelia Schober Plath, in her introduction, describes the death of her husband. Otto Plath, mostly German, a little Polish, much older than his wife, was a scholar, an expert on bees, a domestic authoritarian. He became ill, and for some years refused to see a doctor, having diagnosed his complaint as lung cancer. It was in fact diabetes. In 1940 he had a gangrenous leg amputated and died. Sylvia Plath was then eight. In the autobiographical *Bell Jar* the heroine's suicide bid follows a visit to her father's grave where she weeps and realises she did not do so earlier. She remarks with chilly ambivalence:

> I had a great yearning lately to pay my father back for all the years of neglect and start tending his grave. I had always been my father's favourite and it seemed fitting I should take on a mourning my mother had never bothered with.

Aurelia Plath is distressed by her daughter's attitude to this issue of mourning. She says she wept alone. 'What I intended as an exercise in courage for the sake of my children was interpreted years later by my daughter as indifference.' She herself had felt her world shaken by seeing her own mother in tears. It is clear that she set herself to shield her children, to secure for them all the moral, material and intellectual advantages they could have, to make them happy. It is also clear that her self-denial, ideals and expectations were a strain on Sylvia Plath, who probably carried a further strain from her mother's unfulfilled ambitions. Destined to be a 'business-woman', Mrs Plath lectured in Medical Secretarial Procedures. What she cared for was literature and culture.

I fear Mrs Plath's gallantry will meet with less sympathy than it should. It is easy and customary to blame 'the Mother' for many inner horrors. It can be forgotten that mothers, in other lights, are also daughters and women, that the death of a husband creates strains to be endured just as much as the death of a father, that death cannot be undone, either by mourning or by courage. It is entirely natural that Mrs Plath should appear unduly concerned that Sylvia should not think of 'depressing' things: once tragedy has struck a family, all the members seem perpetually vulnerable. There is nevertheless something distressing about Sylvia's persistent tone of gay and solicitous reassurance, even accompanying a possibly 'depressing' poem with an admonition to 'understand that it's done tongue in cheek'. Mrs Plath is disturbed by Sylvia's discovery that sad stories sold better to teenage magazines than 'her exuberant, joyous outbursts'. In the turmoil of the collapse of Sylvia's marriage, Sylvia writes almost crossly, for once, rejecting maternal advice to write about 'decent courageous people'. She published *The Bell Jar* under a pseudonym and felt great guilt over writing it.

The letters are selectively edited and have been cut. This may, or may not, be responsible for the fact that even those Mrs Plath apologetically calls 'desperate', written in 1963, seem strenuously cheery, at worst irritable or briefly glum. The prevailing tone throughout is Pollyanna's 'being glad' – a mixture of euphoria, lists of social, publishing and academic successes, and a woman's magazine self-examination for signs of 'maturity'. I knew Sylvia Plath very slightly at Cambridge and found her hard to talk to: she was very gracious, very deliberately outgoing, almost aggressively an image of the healthy American girl, blonded hair, red mouth, full of bouncy wonder. I can imagine that girl writing these letters: not those poems. The letters show her creating herself deliberately as a success, in both conventional social terms and competitive academic ones. There was tension between these – at High School, after her early lyrics had pleased a teacher she wrote in her diary, 'I am doubtful about poetry's effect on the little strategy of "popularity" I have been building up'. She made her A-grades into a joke for dancing partners, hid her publishing successes from potentially jealous contemporaries. She worked with obsessive perfectionism, writing 1,500 words a day as 'scales and exercises'; even, after her breakdown, producing the best occupationally therapeutic weaving in her mental hospital – 'though Sylvia claimed it was awful'.

Her intelligence worked at another level on this process of mask-making and character-building. At 17, in her diary, she analyses a conscious and complex narcissism. She is afraid of marriage. She would prefer to be a disembodied God. But:

> I have a terrible egotism. I love my flesh, my face, my limbs with overwhelming devotion . . . I pose and prink before the mirror . . . I have erected in my mind an image of myself – idealistic and beautiful. Is not that image, free from blemish, the true perfection?

At 22, after the suicide bid, the resurrected intellect was working on Dostoevsky's 'doubles'. She writes of the delights of Freud, Frazer and Jung:

> all fascinating stuff about the ego as symbolised in reflections (mirror and water) shadows, twins – dividing off and becoming an enemy, or omen of death . . . or a means by which one denies the power of death (e.g., by creating the idea of the soul as the deathless double of the immortal body).

When she met Ted Hughes at Cambridge she was an accomplished craftsman, a fiercely competitive intellectual, a woman afraid of being too powerful, seeing herself as a 'queen' among men, or 'the princess on the glass hill'. Ted Hughes was 'the only man in the world who is my match'. Marriage to him produces a vatic note:

> I am a woman and glad of it and my songs will be of the fertility of the earth and the people in it, through waste, sorrow and death. I shall be a woman singer and Ted and I shall make a fine life together.

The marriage broke the forms and ambitions which had so far sustained and strained her. She decided, Hughes says, 'with great difficulty and against great tactical opposition from individuals she regarded as benefactors, to leave teaching and throw herself on writing'. Ted, she writes, 'doesn't demand Immediate Success and Publication and is teaching me not to'. She rejects the 'academic writer' who doesn't *feel* reality, but thinks and needs

> symbols, irony, archetypal images and all that. Well, we will try to get along without such conscious and contrived machinery. We write and wake up with symbols on our pages but do not begin with them.

The fastidious aesthete slowly making verbal mosaics with a Thesaurus is suddenly able to improvise rapidly on themes suggested by an ouija board. The poets devised 'exercises of meditation and invocation' to 'break down the tyranny, the fixed focus and public persona' of poems. Sylvia Plath found that meditation, magic, folklore and the figures – vampires, witches and serpents – of her private nightmare world cohered.

> With the birth of her first child [Hughes says], she received herself and was able to turn to her advantage all the forces of a highly-disciplined, highly intellectual style of education which had, up to this point, worked mainly against her . . .

The rest is by now history and mythology.

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The marriage failed. Hughes's successful presence clearly threatened her attempts to reassert her social and intellectual selves in his milieu. She wrote *The Bell Jar*, thus, presumably, calling up the emotions and images of that earlier terror and failure. She also wrote, before her suicide, the triumphantly powerful *Ariel* poems in which woman and witch, waxen image and perfected death-mask, angry wife and mother and daughter cohere, in which the savagely personal achieves the impersonality of high art. The cool American wit and intellectual control of the well-trained poet handle explosive material literally conjured up by the release of a concrete imagination. Magic tales, mythic monsters, are ways an imagination may come to terms with the dark. But they also give it shape and substance. The father died, the hurricane really smashed the windows. Ted Hughes taught the poet to turn round, confront and conjure up the bald ladies and the black daddy who in nursery-rhyme rhythms 'bit my pretty red heart in two'. The last poems are a deliberate exploration of the nature of death and the poet's enduring relationship with it. They made it real.

V. S. Pritchett

Here Be Monsters

Lenin in Zurich by ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN translated by H. T. Willetts *Bodley Head* £3.75

Lenin in Zurich consists of a number of chapters which Solzhenitsyn cut out of *August 1914*, obviously because they ran too far ahead of the time scale of the huge historical chronicle he is working on. These chapters have a natural intensity and unity and have something of the scenario for a film. We are plunged suddenly into Lenin's mind without preparation, as he stands with his wife and his mother-in-law on an Austrian station platform staring at the engine of the train – frightening image of impersonal power – which will soon carry them to Cracow. The 1914 war has taken him by surprise. So deep in the tactics and mechanics of conspiracy is he that he simply has not noticed the onset of a stupendous act of history and is utterly unprepared for its accidental element. Once more – as in 1905 – the conspirator finds real life has outpaced the tactician. When the train gets to Cracow his situation has again changed: he will have to make for neutral Switzerland. But at Cracow, where the first Polish wounded are arriving and the crowds of women are weeping over the stretchers, he has already been revived by an exultation that will keep him going:

> Piss-poor, slobbering pseudo-socialists with the petit-bourgeois worm in them would try to capture the masses by jabbering away 'for peace'. They must be hit first and fast. Which of them has the vision to see and the strength of mind to embrace the great decision ahead: not to try and stop the war, but to step it up? To transfer it – *to your own country*.
>
> 'Peace' is a slogan for fatheads and traitors! What is the point of a hollow peace that nobody needs, unless you can convert it immediately into *civil war with no quarter given*?

In the next three years Solzhenitsyn puts us inside Lenin's mind, crushes us against it, entangles us with it, takes us down into the pit of his rancours, his frustrations and the cold hatreds that sustain him, as he keeps the political machine in his mind oiled and free of rust, while he is bemused in limbo.

To those of us who haven't the prerevolutionary conspiracies in Russia at our fingertips, Solzhenitsyn's assaulting method of displaying Lenin's life and mind is something of a nightmare – or a crossword puzzle. Fortunately there is a very complete biographical glossary at the end of the book: in some way, especially in its deadpan irony, it is more effective than the book itself. Aided by this, one gradually gets the hang of a drama which is sardonic, thrilling and at times movingly human. Solzhenitsyn is a master of the difficulty, so attractive to the modern novelist, of turning the present and the past into dramatic or continuous present. You use a kind of expressionist method in order to get rid of clumsy flashbacks. This instantaneous method is hard on the nerves; in fact you have a claustrophobic fever which, it turns out, is exactly suited to the situation and to Lenin's narrow, fanatic character.

For in Zurich the burning revolutionary was experiencing something not as exalted as a 'dark night of the soul', but was rather a mouse going round on a wheel cut off from the main action. He was in a detestable, bourgeois country where even the puddles in the street were clean. He was cut off from his Russian contacts and kept his mind alive by going over the jargon of Marxist casuistry with a toothcomb in the town library. He was middle-aged. He had to rack his mind in order to guess which events in the war were profitable to the cause, and to suspect each attractive vision that was brought to him. It was difficult for a man set on his purpose to keep clear of the demoralising quarrels of exiles but, apt as he was for ruthless cynical decisions, he had to guard himself against the long-term debilitating effect of ruthlessness; and against the depressing suspicion that an isolated leader will lose control to others, outside.

The thing was to be immediate on shifting ground. The war was a gift in itself to revolutionaries, but now – where would the revolution start? Russia was inaccessible. The one certain thing the war made sense of was the idea of permanent revolution, i.e., permanent civil war. Why could it not begin in neutral Switzerland? That idea came to nothing: the swinish Swiss socialists were pusillanimous. They were in love with 100 years of petit-bourgeois neutrality; and were more interested – how could you believe it! – in defending their country. This failure made him furious with himself: why hadn't he seen that Stockholm was the place to set the world revolution going? In the end, the Germans were plotting to use him against the Tsarists and he had the humiliation of hearing from others not condemned to inactivity (writing pamphlets in the Zurich library), and – in 1917 – he was once more taken by surprise and did not for a long time believe that the Revolution had begun in Russia.

Of course, this is a gross simplification of Solzhenitsyn's chronicle. *That* depends on his dramatic rendering of Lenin's introspections, as they torment his mind and become minutely argued decisions. This portrait of the cautious, mistrustful, penetrating fanatic's mind is very alive from day to day. On the inhuman human being, it is at moments very moving. Solzhenitsyn rather overdoes Lenin's 'gimlet eyes', but Lenin's half laugh, his sudden half sympathies, his slyness and cunning melting into a flash of tolerance for a moment, his dissembling with this man or that, *almost* become brief intimate human glimpses. There is a strain of wan, indifferent memory of past kindnesses. If he takes the silent care of his wife for granted and on his terms – the Cause is more important than any human being – his silence recognises a debt.

I think Solzhenitsyn is faintly sentimental when he shows us Lenin longing for his mistress Inessi Armand who refuses to come when she is called; indeed the novelist conveys more of what Lenin's feeling might be when he shows him for a moment thinking that an unknown woman who passes him on her horse on one of his lonely walks is she. But Solzhenitsyn is clear that the *ménage à trois* succeeds because Inessi *and* his own wife understand that for him, indeed for all three, the Cause is more important than the wounds of personal relationships or indeed the pleasures.

Solzhenitsyn says that the dialogue in the book is documented and close to the dreary language of the dialectic in which Lenin and his conspirators habitually chatted. One can be sure of that, and it is a relief to come upon two scenes in which Lenin is brought to life by rogues, the fantastic Parvus, the millionaire conspirator and the brilliantly cynical Radek. This journalist is at his merriest when it comes to writing articles or letters of eager duplicity. The sight of shamelessness so happy and inspired is almost cheering. As for the fat Parvus who has made millions in Turkey and delights in getting funds for revolutionaries out of capitalist financiers – he is a sort of stage magician. He knows money is power and simply loves playing with it in order to buy women, châteaux and, in a most disinterested way, leaders. Thus he has been invaluable to the conspirators.

The battle of wits between Parvus and Lenin is very well done, for even if he is melodramatic, Solzhenitsyn has a strong

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feeling for Lenin's 'slyly good-natured Asiatic smile' and his 'gopher-like grin'. Here is Parvus trying to pump his hippopotamus blood into the frustrated emigré, flinging open the gates:

> Join our alliance . . . The time has come for your underground work to work and conquer . . . Give us names . . . Who is to receive leaflets and literature? Transporting weapons is more difficult, but we'll take weapons in too . . . I can't imagine how you manage here from Switzerland. Shall I arrange a move to Stockholm?

Lenin's travels got him down. He knows Parvus is loyal but he rushes everything. He lacks the stamina for a long race. Twenty years of re-educating German socialists had bored him – but Lenin was not going to let the leadership slip and had the strength to run for ever: 'if need be he would collapse into the grave with his race unfinished, but he would never drop out.' People winced at the sight of the Oriental blubberyness of Parvus. Eagerly one looks him up in the glossary. He is one of the few who is not killed off by Stalin in the end and his biography is long. The Red millionaire had no faith, we are told, in the Bolsheviks' organising ability. He attacked Lenin's concessions to the peasants. He ended by building himself an opulent house on the island of Schwanenberger in Germany and lived there to enjoy his orgies for the rest of his life.

Except in the Parvus episode Lenin seems an arid fanatic, a tactician without a field of battle, out of touch and self-absorbed to the point of being out of date. This, of course, cannot be so. The test for Solzhenitsyn as a chronicler and a portrayer will come in the sequel. At the moment, though one must admire the histrionic force of his subjective method, I doubt whether this way of writing will succeed when Solzhenitsyn has to show Lenin acting upon events. In the end one puts down the instalment uttering Vautrin's words: 'All great men are monsters.'

Paul Johnson

No Give-Away

Who's Who 1976 *Adam & Charles Black* £18.00

The new *Who's Who* is noticeably bigger than ever before. It has 2,500 pages, over 26,000 entries, weighs 5½ lbs and costs £18, that is, the price of a second-class return rail-ticket to Blackpool, a week's heating for your house from the Central Electricity Generating Board, four tickets to Covent Garden Opera or enough stamps to post about 200 letters. Why so big? Partly because there are now more women (though no Joan Bakewell, Jill Tweedie, Germaine Greer or Jilly Cooper), more show-biz (though no Jimmy Savile), and many more foreigners, especially Afro-Asian bigwigs. We learn, for instance, that Julius Nyerere has found time while running his one-party state to translate the *Merchant of Venice* into Swahili, and that Air Chief Marshal Roesmin Nurjadin is a member of the Djakarta Golf Club. There seems no hope of actually reducing the contents to manageable size, since the editors, while not forcing people to appear (Bernard Levin, for instance, refuses), never drop them until they are dead, no matter how obscure they become, and exercise surprisingly little discipline over the boastful and the prolix.

All the odder, then, that thoughtless critics should attack Tony Benn for shortening his entry. They should know that a favourite country house game is to force guests to read out their entries, and that it's far more shameful to have a lengthy one than not to be in at all. By this standard Benn wins the jackpot as he is now down to 19 words, four more than Major-General Skinner, the runner-up. These two make three lines; and there are a few four-liners. The longest entries usually belong to people one has never heard of, like the 72-liner who says his hobby is 'watching the moods of Lago Bracchiano'. A particular menace are those with a ferocious appetite for fame who achieve it early: David Frost already occupies the best part of a column and contrives to include the word 'Frost' thirty times, which alone is nearly twice Benn's entire entry. Other major offenders are actors and theatrical producers who list all their shows, and prolific authors (usually of little distinction); one man, I see, has contrived to publish 62 books since 1947, five in 1970 alone, and lists the lot. The Australians are also windy, particularly if they are lawyers; full marks, then, to Rupert Murdoch, who is a mere five lines.

On the other hand, it's true that without the longer or more exhibitionist entries we should miss all the fun: *Who's Who* remains one of the best of all bedside books. What is omitted is as interesting as what is put in. Those who decline to give their private address include all African dictators, most Labour cabinet ministers, the editor of *Private Eye*, etc. There is also some reticence among those who have been – how shall we say? – in difficulties. Thus General Haig tells us he was 'Chief of White House Staff 1973-4', at the end of which he was 'recalled to active duty', but makes no mention of Nixon. The latter at least admits he resigned (he doesn't say why), which is more than Spiro Agnew does. When a man actually goes to prison, the only notice the editors take is to drop his address until he is released. They do not take cognisance of crime or scandal; thus in Lord Lucan's entry the one episode of note in his whole life is omitted. On the other hand, when trouble with the authorities seems honourable, the fact crops up. Among those proud to come clean are Garfield Todd ('arrested by Smith regime'), Solzhenitsyn ('sentenced to eight years imprisonment'), Hastings Banda ('imprisoned for political reasons'), Georges Bidault ('charged with plot against the security of the state'), Arthur Koestler ('imprisoned by General Franco'), and Archbishop Makarios, who for good measure adds a potted history of modern Cyprus, but omits his real name.

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Goodbye Father

MAUREEN GREEN

Despite drastic changes in father's authority over the past century, his role has attracted little professional or popular attention. Yet every step that advances the rights of women and children diminishes father's rights and duties. Maureen Green, a journalist, for many years on the *Observer* magazine, assesses father's current problems through many interviews with divorced fathers, step-fathers and others who find their role particularly untenable. Tom Crabtree writes in *New Society*: 'There are a good many things in this book I wish I'd written, . . . This is a useful introduction to a sensitive subject, a book which will be widely read and deservedly so. The book is attractively produced and has an invaluable bibliography.' £3.95

At Risk

An Account of the Work of the Battered Child Research Department, NSPCC. In recent years the problem of the battered child in Britain has increasingly come to be seen as a matter for grave public concern. *At Risk* is a detailed study of twenty-five families who were referred to the Battered Child Research Department of the NSPCC and who received help there over a three-year period. *Direct Edition* £3.75

Routledge & Kegan Paul

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Who's Who entry is not to give hostages to fortune (or raw material to enemies). Varieties of snobbery reveal themselves in the most unlikely quarters: thus Dennis Skinner, the noisy egalitarian MP for Bolsover, wishes us to know that he comes of 'good working-class mining stock'. And why is it that the humbly-born are ready to acknowledge only agricultural forebears, as, for instance, Nureyev ('of a farming family')? There is something to be said for the openly vainglorious. Buckminster Fuller lists himself as 'American geometer, educator and architect-designer', tells us he holds '26 patents', including the 'first and only cartography patent awarded in USA', is responsible for 'over 50,000 geodesic domes erected in 50 different countries', holds '37 honorary degrees' and has composed 'an untitled epic poem on the history of industrialisation' – what I would call a meaty entry.

The best test of character comes under 'recreations'. The prudent majority are prosaic. Some are smart and get away with it: for instance, Edna O'Brien ('movement by day, dreams by night') and James Cameron ('private life, public houses'). Some seem to confuse leisure with work: Lord Baden-Powell ('scouting'), Clive Jenkins ('organising the middle class') and Auberon Waugh ('gossip'). Some are a little smug, like Reyner Banham ('indistinguishable from daily interest in architecture and design'), pretentious, like James Kirkup ('standing in shafts of sunlight'), or facetious: thus many put 'sleeping', Jonathan Miller going one better (naturally) with 'deep sleep'.

I award the wooden spoon this year to the Rev. Paul Oestreicher with

> fighting for under-dogs; exploring relationship between Christianity and politics; encouraging exchange of people and ideas between East and West; riding horses (too seldom); Mozart; silence.

(Eh? What was that last bit?) Which reminds me that one notable omission, granted the new Afro-Asian policy of *Who's Who*, is General Amin, who I think might provide an entry of singular felicity. I beg the editors to leave no stone, indeed gravestone, unturned until they obtain it. What, I wonder, would *he* put down for 'recreations'?

Marina Warner

Empire Maid

Travels by JAN MORRIS *Faber* £4.50

With the souk of San'a now a stone's throw from the Burlington Arcade, and the tents of the nomads of the Hausa pitched just off Holland Park, it is a demonstration of Jan Morris's natural serendipity – a quality she rightly believes is necessary to every traveller – that she opens this volume of essays with a kind of muezzin's paean to the Marco Polo of Islam, Ibn Batuta, 'The Best Travelled Man in the World'. In the 14th century, Ibn Batuta wandered through the civilisation that had been united by the Koran. One Sultan he met gave him 'the annual revenue from several villages'; another gave him sour curds. He saw the daughter of the Emperor of Byzantium return home after an unhappy marriage to a real, regular Tartar: she was dressed entirely in gold, and was met by her brother outside Constantinople with a guard of 5,000 horsemen. But Ibn Batuta does not just provide Jan Morris with a flashing sequence of Arabian Nights imagery. He is a model traveller: 'endlessly curious . . . adept at generalisation', who 'drew no particular lessons from his journeying'. And the world he travelled, the spiritual entity of Islam, compares with the civilisation that was once united under the Union Jack. At least, that is Jan Morris's view, and *Travels* largely represents her quest to catch the changing quality of Britishness, in Hong Kong, Singapore, Calcutta in the late 18th century, Canada in the Twenties, Edinburgh the 'Auld Reekie' and her own home town of Bath.

The Morris wit, the Morris mix of historical anecdote and shrewd observation is there: Lady Lorne who on her wedding day spits on the Marquis of Montrose in the street below as he passes to his execution; the Dublin witness of a bank robbery who with blood-streaked face enthusiastically gives details to the police – in a butcher's shop under the turkeys. But the fond tilts at 'knighted drapers on charitable committees', the talk of gin slings, of philistine merchants, of sticky cakes and 'elderly white-coated grocers who ask if they may deliver the cheeses Madam' become wearisome. One of the positive words that recur – without irony – is 'agreeable'. That is the trouble: it is all too agreeable.

For Ibn Batuta's colourful, curious and observant phantom is holding hands behind Jan Morris's head with another ghost from a closer and more disturbing world. In the essay 'Through My Guide Books', the author conjures up 19th-century travellers such as Murray, who advised: 'Any English man having the usual knowledge of Ancient Greek will be able to read the Athenian papers with ease.' She acknowledges that Peter Fleming (in our times) was the apotheosis of this genre of traveller, and throughout *Travels* is haunted by the Fleming Legend, which Auden and Isherwood nailed so well in their *Journey to War*, where they painted Fleming in China on his way to the horrors of the Sino-Japanese front, in immaculately pressed shorts and golf stockings, equipped with drawl, articulate questions and excellent Chinese and giving polite but incontestable orders.

'The authority of manners' which Jan Morris describes as the atmosphere peculiar to Bath, and the enervation of Empire she conjures so expressively in Singapore have become her own characteristics as she affectionately pursues the declining assurance of the British in the lands they once directed. Her style echoes Fleming's unflappableness, with overtones of the sprightly lady missionary. I was often reminded of Mildred Cable and Francesca French who crossed the Gobi desert in the Twenties in unsprung carts with little but Bibles in their luggage. In their book *Through the Jade Gate*, they never catechised either and their bonhomie was indestructible.

The problem with a tolerant, mildly amused, English patrician approach is that it is often blind to trouble. Perhaps in Bath it is true that 'there is nothing to be said about . . . ' But is it true of Hong Kong that 'the profit motive paradoxically defuses life and makes nearly everyone brothers under the skin'? Aren't some of the British in Hong Kong amongst the most narrow, prejudiced, ignorant and unpleasant racists outside Southern Africa? Jan Morris has been deceived by dinner parties at which Chinese and British sat down side by side and although she notes that the Chinese all spoke English, and the English did not speak Chinese and for the most part knew nothing about China's civilisation, she seems to think that 'unless you count bafflement as prejudice', there is no chauvinism. She quotes as an example of Sinophile a lady who takes her bicycle to China and goes sketching round Pekin. The selfsame sensitive soul has been heard to declare regretfully that 'the end of the Vietnam war has been a disaster for the colony – no more American spending'. Jan Morris was less charmed by Singapore where the antiseptic hard sense of Lee Kuan Yew's 'City State' filled her with suspicion. However, she is still not rouse

Andrew Waterman

Fragilities

Crossing among the buildings, or rising
from ink's thin tangling skeins, always I see
pale Antrim hills beyond my afternoon,

fragilities fresh from each drift of rain
enticing till greenness tires of itself, betrays
to its essence, eternity.

I have known the going, light blown wave on wave
over grass and chill of water, to the turn
back. Truth lies another way,

now conjured with the light-switch on my pane:
room, littered desk, paperweight. Innocent
behind me still, that door.

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to indignation, still not drawing any particular lessons.

But the cavils have to stop when it comes to the final essay, 'Fame's Stamping Ground'. This portrait of Washington DC must rank with the finest of travel writings, if such an acute ear and imaginative and piercing eye as Jan Morris displays do not pluck it out of the category altogether. 'The artificial capital' with 'its shrine-like posture' and 'its necromantic attitude', its forgettable politicians who look as though they need 'some fresh vegetables for a change', where conspiracy terrors spread like cholera, has never been so cruelly exposed. The FBI marksman who demonstrates his skill to tourists on a paper cut-out of a human figure, and then gives the mangled effigy to a child; the deaf statesman on the sofa who remembers everyone and everything:

> Who's that? What? Sure, I remember when Jack cut off aid there. Sam didn't agree. Ted did. De Gaulle didn't want it. I thought we should. What? Who's that? Sure, I remember that very well – the Bay of Pigs – the U2 – Eisenhower didn't have any idea – Khrushchev didn't know . . .

These are true specimens of the soul of a place, tweezed out, bottled and docketed for amateurs of American civilisation, now and in the future.

Derek Mahon

Sam's Think

Samuel Beckett by JOHN PILLING *Routledge* £5.75

Speaking of Bram van Velde in the third of his 'Dialogues with Georges Duthuit', Beckett proposes an inexpressive art such as, he claims, never before existed: 'Let us, for once, be foolish enough not to turn tail. All have turned wisely tail, before the ultimate penury.' And he explicity associates his own work with the kind of programme he admires in the Dutch artist:

> There are many ways in which the thing I am trying in vain to say may be tried in vain to be said. I have experimented with two or three hundred.

One of the earliest formulations is the incident, in *Watt*, of the 'piano-chooners', one blind, who stand in a sunlit music room exchanging doom-laden remarks about Mr Knott's instrument. For Watt the scene takes on 'a purely plastic content' and becomes an example of 'light commenting bodies, and stillness motion, and silence sound, and comment comment'.

Another formulation is the 'soul landscape' described in the Addenda to the same book. Sky, 'waste' and Watt are of 'a dark colour', a colour so dark, indeed, as to defy identification as such: 'The source of the feeble light diffused over this scene is unknown. Beneath Watt the waste rose and fell. All was silent.' Then there are the last words of Lucky's 'think' in *Waiting for Godot*, where 'the skull in Connemara', 'the tennis' and 'Cunard' combine to suggest a Proustian glimpse of childhood, a summer afternoon in the west of Ireland during long-ago school holidays. (Although Lucky may be thinking of Nancy Cunard, who published Beckett's *Whoroscope* in 1930, and not of a passing liner.) What these formulations have in common is a highly pictorial quality. We remember Beckett's interest in the art of Jack B. Yeats (the dark waste, the skull); and, in the incident of the piano-chooners, his predilection for the music of a composer like Schubert (stillness commenting motion); for Beckett, an excellent pianist himself by all accounts, is an intensely musical writer as well as an imagistic one: Molloy calls the trilogy of novels in which he appears a 'long sonata of the dead'. Nor is Beckett above using the 'decadent' device of the art simile, as when he praises a night sky for being of the kind admired by Kaspar David Friedrich.

John Pilling doesn't take us very far in the matter of analogies with these other arts (as central to Beckett, I suggest, as sculpture to Pound); and having said that, my reservations are almost at an end. Others have dealt at greater length or in greater depth with particular aspects (John Fletcher with the novels, Alec Reid with the plays, Lawrence E. Harvey with the poems); but Dr Pilling's book, like Hugh Kenner's 20-year-old pioneering study, is an extremely illuminating general guide. It is also mercifully free of the exhibitionism and mythomania that bedevil so much Beckett criticism. The most original and revealing chapters are those on the intellectual and literary background, where it's clear that the author has read everything of importance. (Of which there is a great deal, ranging from Cangiamila's *Sacred Embryology* and, God help us, Pope Benedict XIV's *Diocesan Synod* to the logical positivist Mauthner and the physicist Schrödinger.) Dr Pilling traces Beckett's exposure to formal philosophy with scrupulous regard for what he was reading when. We learn, for example, that A. A. Luce, who edited the definitive edition of Berkeley, was Beckett's tutor at Trinity College, Dublin, which sends us back to that 'seedy solipsist', the eponymous anti-hero of *Murphy*. (And also to *Film*, based on the Berkeleyan dictum that 'to be is to be perceived'.) After his first move to Paris he studied Descartes, whose intention to make 'such enumerations that we can be sure of leaving nothing out' is thereafter an obsession with Beckett's characters: Molloy's stone-sucking is perhaps the most celebrated example. Later he read Schopenhauer, whose implied conclusion, that the end of philosophy is silence, became, in the novel trilogy, a vital (some would say a vitiating) principle.

On the literary background Dr Pilling is rather brief and tantalising about Dante and Dickens. 'What is important about Dante for students of Beckett,' he says, 'is that Beckett was at one time tempted to conceive of reality in similar terms.' And he goes on to mention Belacqua in the *Purgatorio*. But why is there no discussion of *The Lost Ones* at this point? He makes an interesting comparison with Dickens, whom he quotes as saying, in conversation, with almost the precise inflection of a Beckett character (Mrs Rooney, say, in *All That Fall*): 'The greatest mystery in all the earth to me, is how or why the world was tolerated by its Creator, in the good old days, and not dashed to fragments'; and notes that *Great Expectations* is cited in Beckett's early essay on Joyce; but he doesn't pursue the matter. The Macmann country, for example, surely owes something to Magwitch's appearance in the Thames marshes 'on a raw afternoon towards evening', when Pip receives his first impression of 'the identity of things'. But just as it would be misleading to suggest that Beckett's long 'think' is a sort of comic mime of the history of Western philosophy from the pre-Socratics to the Existentialists, so too it would be a mistake to make too much of the literary influences; for Beckett's work is finally *sui generis*. Also, since he first started writing in French, it has been

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Among this week's contributors:

A. S. BYATT lectures in English Literature at University College London; she is the author of a critical study of Iris Murdoch's work and of two novels, *Shadow of a Sun* and *The Game*.

MARINA WARNER is the author of *The Dragon Empress* (1972); her study of the Virgin Mary, *Alone of All Her Sex*, will appear this autumn.

DEREK MAHON'S most recent collection of poems, *The Snow Party*, was published by Oxford last year.

GEOFFREY GORER'S books include *Himalayan Village* and *Exploring English Character*.

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HARRAP BOOKS

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really quite simple, unencumbered for the most part by overtly extraneous matter. Much of the time it is even dull. One is tempted to skip. One does, in fact, skip. In all probability your Beckett books, like mine, have the 'good bits' earmarked and asterisked. Such is human nature. But the good bits are very good indeed. Not inexpressive as their author might wish, but expressive of a rare vision, like the 'brief scattered lights' in *Malone Dies*: 'They were things that scarcely were, on the confines of silence and dark, and soon ceased.'

Geoffrey Gorer

Displaced Person

The Great Universe of Kota: Stress, Change and Mental Disorder in an Indian Village by G. M. CARSTAIRS and R. L. KAPUR *Hogarth Press* £5.50

Dr Kapur, an Indian-trained psychiatrist with five years study in Edinburgh, his wife, also a psychiatrist, and several Indian helpers devised, with the advice and assistance of Dr Carstairs, who also paid two visits to the research site, an elaborate questionnaire (the Indian Psychiatric Survey Schedule) to elicit fairly rapidly the epidemiological presence or absence of psychiatric symptoms in a large population. After several pilot runs and other tests, the questionnaire was administered to 1,233 people belonging to three castes in the southern coastal village of Kota in the 1972 rainy season; 456 were found to have one or more psychiatric symptoms and 187 were considered to be in need of psychiatric help. This research is summarised in *The Great Universe of Kota* (the self-mocking name which the inhabitants of the scattered village give to their main street) but the more technical details are reserved for specialised publications.

It is rather difficult to guess for what audience this book was written. It is too abstract and desiccated to be of interest to the general reader – it contains no people, only tables and statistics – and it does not provide nearly enough information for the social anthropologist or sociologist or, one would think, for the psychiatrist. Certainly, it documents very convincingly the fact that psychiatric symptoms and mental distress are not confined (as some may have thought) to the citizens of complex societies but are widespread in the simpler 'third world'; it shows that the Indian Health Service and the Health Services in other 'third world' countries pay little attention to psychiatric symptoms and offer little relief for these miseries; and in its final chapter it suggests that this state of affairs might be remedied by the employment of partially-trained psychiatric investigators ('bare-foot doctors') working under a trained psychiatrist and by purposeful collaboration with the traditional native healers; there are three types of these in Kota and their methods of working and the frequency with which they were consulted by psychiatric sufferers are briefly described.

In its design the research in Kota promised to be more interesting than it turned out to be in practice. The interviews were administered to half the members of three of the 11 castes who inhabit Kota: the Brahmins, chiefly landowners, who are patrilineal and the Bants, chiefly tenant-farmers; and the Mogers, chiefly cooperative fishermen, who were traditionally matrilineal, with property going from uncle to sister's son and the women, after marriage, spending half of each year in the parental home. It was hoped that these two contrasting types of family authority and composition would provide two differing profiles of psychiatric symptoms and clarify the role of social institutions in the epidemiology of neurosis.

Unfortunately, in 1957 the paternalistic Indian government made matrilineal inheritance illegal, which led to the gradual break-up of the joint matrilineal families. The Bant and Moger women have more suffering from mild psychiatric symptoms than do the Brahmin women (the Brahmin men have more grave psychotics) but this unhappiness was concentrated on women who had moved away from the joint matrilineal households:

> the rate of those with symptoms among Bant and Moger women who had not changed their residence pattern was 36 per cent, only 3 per cent higher than that of Brahmin women, while the corresponding rate was 53 per cent in case of those who had changed!

It might have been helpful if the authors had contrasted these forcibly displaced Bant and Moger women, not with Brahmin women, but with the beneficiaries of slum clearance, living lonely and empty lives in high-rise flats and council-house suburbs. Indirectly, this book documents the high cost in psychiatric misery of well-meaning social planning. The authors are eminently sensible in their discussion of psychiatric symptoms and the undesirability of quick diagnostic labelling and the impossibility of measuring 'social functioning' as a diagnostic tool; and they give in summary form a good deal of information about the Kannada-speaking people of South-West India.

Alan Ryan

Victory

The Survivor by TERRENCE DES PRES *Oxford* £4.00

The Survivor is a book which it is impossible not to admire; but, if it is an easy book to praise, it is an oddly difficult one to describe. *Oddly* difficult, because at one level it is, of course, entirely obvious what it is about – the experiences of those who tried to stay alive in the death camps of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The difficulty arises because Des Pres is torn between his desire to use what happened in the death camps as evidence for a general theory about the biological basis of social behaviour and his even stronger desire to stick as close as he can to the words and memories of those who endured the horrors he recounts.

Thus, one paragraph starts with the claim that 'the most significant fact' about the struggle for survival was its dependence 'on forms of social bonding and interchange, on collective resistance, on keeping dignity and moral sense active'; it goes on to suggest that survivors in extreme conditions 'endure less through cultural than through biological imperatives'; and it ends with something close to a disavowal of any theoretical or sociological aspirations. 'The experience itself is what counts. An agony so massive should not be, indeed cannot be, reduced to a bit of datum in a theory.' Of course, there is no incoherence in wanting to establish what the long-term prisoners of Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen or Buchenwald did and felt as well as wanting to work out how those who came through found the strength and motivation to do so; but there is at least some tension between the desire to bear witness and the desire to make sense of the almost incomprehensible.

Des Pres obviously feels – and rightly – that at all costs he should write nothing that belittles the suffering of the survivor; both in fact and in fiction, the survivor is the man or woman who hangs on to life in intolerable circumstances, in order that there should be someone to remember what had been done. For survival was a sort of victory:

> The SS guards took pleasure in telling us that we had no chance of coming out alive, a point they emphasised with particular relish by insisting that after the war the rest of the world would not believe what happened; there would be rumours, speculations, but no clear evidence, and people would conclude that evil on such a scale was just not possible.

The great decency of *The Survivor* stems from its reticence; Des Pres doesn't set out to speak for the victims of a suffering unknown to himself, but to make sure that they can speak as they would wish to. Characteristically, he leaves the moral of the book to a survivor of Sachsenhausen who told new prisoners what they had to expect: 'I have not told you of our experiences to harrow you, but to strengthen you . . . Now you may decide if you are justified in despairing.'

The underlying theme of *The Survivor* is that we are not justified in despairing. Des Pres has a great many targets to attack, and what they have in common is that they justify either cynicism or despair. Thus, he has some fierce things to say about Bruno Bettelheim's account of allegedly regressive behaviour in *The Informed Heart*; he convicts Bettelheim of some startling misreporting of other people's testimony, and he convicts almost all psychoanalytical writers on concentration camp life of a naïve transfer of interpretations appropriate to civilised life into a wholly inappropriate environment. In an extraordinary chapter on 'Excremental Assault', Des Pres reminds us that at Buchenwald a favourite game of the SS was to catch men in the act of relieving themselves and tip them into the latrine, a pit 12 feet deep, in which they duly drowned; in almost any camp, dysentery was rife, but

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it was inviting a fatal beating to stop work or break ranks to relieve oneself. To regard anxiety about excretion in these conditions as the same sort of phenomenon as the regressive anxiety of the comfortable neurotic is both an intellectual and a moral disgrace. The moral of the piecemeal attacks is, I think, that we should think more highly of 'natural man', and less highly of 'civilisation'; natural man survives under intolerable conditions by mutual aid, by solidarity, by taking hard decisions without being demoralised by them. We are not naturally self-destructive creatures partially tamed by culture; we are naturally self-preserving creatures misled by the life of the mind into despairing when the world will not live up to 'higher values'.

It is no great criticism of Des Pres to say that his praise of a biological ethics is a great deal less lucid and persuasive than his account of the social and psychological resources which enabled the survivors to survive. He says as much himself. And *The Survivor* somehow disarms criticism – not as books on this sort of subject often do, by insisting on the author's seriousness as something entitling him to immunity, but by leaving the reader free to think for himself, not by hectoring or wheedling. It is a very considerable achievement.

Susannah Clapp

Mosaic Lore

Unto Death by AMOS OZ translated from the Hebrew by Nicholas de Lange in collaboration with the author *Chatto* £3.25
The Beginning by DAVID MARKISH translated from the Russian by Michael Glenny *Hodder & Stoughton* £4.50
Foreign Affairs by SEAN O'FAOLAIN *Constable* £2.95
The Sun's Net by GEORGE MACKAY BROWN *Hogarth Press* £3.75

Amos Oz's latest book is made up of two fiery fables about Jewishness. 'Crusade' shows an 11th-century expedition to the Holy Land – a journey envisaged by its leader as a sword passing through the 'turbid water' of the Jews – being bleached into insubstantiality and visionariness by storm, famine, and a seething of portents and omens. In 'Later Love', a Tel Aviv lecturer, whose only subject is Russian Jewry, struggles – words being 'a nasty business' – to formulate his sense of Israel's vulnerability: sketching the Russian spirit as a mixture of 'savagery and sorrow'; dreaming of a vast Jewish rage; pressed by the 'smothered hatred' of the sea.

'Configuration' is a word to which Amos Oz returns – and not without reason. Though both these stories have a tale to tell, each is spun together by glimpses of a world rippling with sinister change, planed by shifting winds and waters. His task is easier in 'Crusade', where a whole medieval horror-show of gleaming skulls and fetid waterholes is available to breathe corruptibility through the plot. It is a measure of Oz's skill that he manages, without straining, to convey the sense of shift and threat in a contemporary context: in 'Later Love' – where the 'jaws of the sea and the desert' ache to close upon Tel Aviv – there is no sense of gasping or inflation. When he speculates that illness is 'a configuration of inner possibilities too numerous to count', Oz is to some extent describing the success of his fiction.

The dazzle of his imagery avoids the vaporousness which it might seem to court – steadied both by the precision of the anger expended and by constant reference to a solidly recognisable world. Both stories breed figures of uneasy memorability. 'Crusade' has Claude Crookback, ambiguous follower of the Count, who pants after women's jewellery, wallows in self-abasement, and flourishes 'like a swamp plant' in the unhealthy atmosphere which clings to the travellers; in 'Later Love', death appears to the narrator as a small, smelly man who sits damply at the foot of his bed. And, in both, casually shrewd asides – about the difficulty of distinguishing between abstraction and concentration, or the variety of ways in which one can be 'out of one's mind' – serve as checks to inattentiveness.

David Markish's examination of Soviet Jewry is more circumstantial and more expansive. It's 1952 and Simon Ashkenazy, 15-year-old son of an 'enemy of the people', is exiled to the steppes of Kazakhstan. Mostly excited, he imagines himself 'herding animals on the limitless plain'. His existence turns out to be a process of sturdy outward adaptation and concerted inner detachment. *The Beginning* documents Simon's progress through an unsuccessful love-affair with a Tartar-owned woman, increasingly urgent dreams about Israel (as a 'mosaic of coloured glass'), a formative friendship with a man who is Stalin's double, a classroom murder, a court case in which a man stands accused of sewing up his wife to prevent access by lovers – and the discovery that writing poetry is necessary to him.

The blending of dreams and actions, the vigorous variety of the subjects tackled, make this a novel of considerable robustness. It is at its best when most informative – about the dried mud huts of the exile settlement, the saiga hunts on the steppes where saltwood trees look as if they've been 'stuffed into a dusty sack' at night; it is least successful when most polemical and anxious to establish 'sides'. *The Beginning* is unusually convincing about the writing of poetry which, contrary to tradition, is presented as an urge to get things straight, and an attack on 'wasting words to no purpose'. It's a creed that fuels much of David Markish's own writing (and that of his translator) and it serves him well.

One of the eight stories in Sean O'Faolain's good new collection is confidently labelled 'How to Write a Short Story'. In it, a would-be Irish Maupassant – all 'flabby tweeds' and flopping hair – listens to a friend's uncomfortable account of schoolboy sex, and declares at the end that he will turn what he has heard 'into a poem about a seashell'. The wit is typical of *Foreign Affairs*; the warning it gives is well-heeded. These stories range from Dublin solitariness to Italian inflammability, but – though eddies of parallels and comparisons sometimes obscure individual points – they never lose sight of the nature of their subject, in a wish to epiphanise or hammer a point. Despite the title of this collection, Sean O'Faolain is best when nearest home: peering into the snugness of a seaside bungalow called 'Lorelei', or observing the thrill a priest can give young girls by whispering 'the most disturbing explanations for their simplest misdemeanours'. His eye is quickest in a confined space, his tone at its nicest – tolerant but alert, avoiding the irritation of affectionate knowingness. And he excels with portly middle age and bespatted or beleaguered senescence with the stuck and the smug – with, in fact, those dwindling characters who would wish their lives to be not novel but short story.

George Mackay Brown's tales of Orkney love and lore are more sparely written and more lushly felt. Treating larger events with less busyness of detail, the stories in *The Sun's Net* have some elements both of fairy-tale and of yarn, but come closest to latter-day saga in the ease with which one voice contains 14th-century romance, contemporary village life, and futuristic vision – with black magic, ghosts and a straightforward pain and maliciousness swept in their train. At their worst, they draw on a rather breathy awe at burgeoning seeds and dark earth cycles; at their best, as in 'Brig-o-Dread', an ambitious mixing of the profane and the prophetic, imagery from the same store is triumphantly precise.

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Television

Dennis Potter

A Note from Mr Milne

I have always found it a pleasure to watch someone cooking his own goose so it is only fair if I open up the oven door on my own plucked and basted carcass to explain why the same team of BBC bureaucrats that didn't bring you *The Naked Civil Servant* has also decided, with similar noises of shock and horror, not to bring you my play *Brimstone and Treacle*. You will have to excuse me, therefore, if I resume this feat in front of the twinkling set with a description of what is going on behind the double-glazed windows at the BBC's pap factory rather than with a review of the Easter holiday programme. I cannot tap at the shell of that particular egg because this is the first chance I have had to set down an account of the way in which *Brimstone and Treacle* was castigated as unfit for the public to see, a decision which in more than my not entirely disinterested opinion reveals a lot about the changing nature of the BBC and the sort of television we're going to get in the future.

'I found the play brilliantly written and made, but nauseating,' said Alasdair Milne, the Director of Programmes, in the one brief and insolent letter he condescended to write to the author:

> I believe that it is right in certain instances to outrage the viewers in order to get over a point of serious importance, but I am afraid that in this case real outrage would be widely felt and that no such point would get across.

Try reading that out loud, and the intonation will comically approximate to the injured tones in which Neville Chamberlain declared war on Germany. But the paragraph, amusing though it is, represents the argument in its entirety as put to me by the BBC hierarchs. Milne cannot bring himself to say which scene, or which shot, or which passage of dialogue made him plunge retching to the sixth floor lavatories at the Television Centre. Nor does he make any suggestions for cuts, or indicate that he will listen to any contrary argument. Instead, when the fuss begins, this Reithian Scot packs his bags and goes off on holiday, presumably to some place where nobody tries to sell him a comic postcard.

Yet if the test of what is to be forbidden to viewers is the possible nausea and outrage the programme might cause, then how come that in the same drear week that *Brimstone and Treacle* was due to be shown we had to put up with such proven emetics as *Jim'll Fix It*, the 400th repeat of *Star Trek*, two uninterrupted hours of the *Eurovision Song Contest* or (even worse) ten uninterrupted minutes of the Rt Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, MP? For answer one might well quote *Cilla* in one of her recent Saturday night 'interviews' with a startled family outside their front door: 'How can he say anything,' she protested when a toddler made an obscure noise, 'if he's got that dummy stuck in his gob?'

Any television company which pumps out programmes every night of the year, for ever and ever, is compelled by its own narrow logistics to accept that it is right in certain instances to outrage the viewer in order to get over a point of no importance whatsoever. The same penny-pinching misfortune or quotidian exhaustion accounts for the fact that no matter how scornfully the BBC sniffs about the degraded commercialism of American television, it is obliged to ship over so many of the worst examples of just such electronic chewing gum. There seems to be no other way to feed the insatiable machine, and therefore necessity has become the mother of hypocrisy: senior programme executives who like to think well of themselves do not spend much time at their desks agonising over tawdry variety shows, alien thrillers, idiot back-chat or the wearily mechanical smut which sustains the worst of the regular comedies. They point instead at the ratings, and wash their hands.

Unfortunately, though, the bilge-water seeps under the office door. Those who use up a lot of their time fastidiously averting their eyes and minds from so much of what is actually produced inevitably find it difficult to look at *anything* with a steady gaze. The characteristic approach of the better programme makers to the programme controllers, therefore, is one of cautious double-talk and protective secrecy. The BBC, in consequence, is an uneasy confederation of cunning groups, each pushing and concealing its product until the moment when it gets on the air. Memoranda drift up from one floor to another, and back down again, or sideways, and in the spaces between the words, so to speak, programmes get made. The ramshackle anachronism which the Corporation has become offers marvellous opportunities if the game is played with properly Byzantine skill, but occasionally a controller loses his head, froths at the mouth and exposes himself and the whole system to ridicule.

Brimstone and Treacle was delivered to the BBC in early December 1974, discussed, praised, accepted and paid for in January 1975, assigned to a producer (Kenith Trodd, thank goodness), discussed again in long and involved meetings, given the crucial nod by the Head of Plays, handed over to director Barry Davis, discussed yet again, then cast, rehearsed, brought into the studio, videotaped, dubbed, scheduled for transmission, and announced in the *Radio Times*. Everyone along the labyrinthine chain of command which makes the BBC so delicately elephantine had a chance to throw in his or her two pennyworth of unhelpful comment. Actors, designers, wardrobe, lighting, cameramen and sound engineers – and about £70,000 – were deployed to bring it from the stage to the screen. You could be forgiven for thinking that a more appropriate point of rejection might have been found during 15 months of work, discussion and expenditure. After all, it's your licence money.

The final outcome of the process, however, was a miserable letter on one sheet of paper which talked about 'nausea' and brazenly closed the door on any other discussions. Yet leaving aside the lack of grace or tardy obtuseness of such a communication, the awkward fact remains that Milne

Jenny Joseph

Lost Hold

I stepped from a bank with sea pink and long tufts
Of separate grasses, the blue day all about me.
Between two steps I saw the earth so clear
Each grain separately winking, heard every leg
Of insect creaking, and every worm that breathed.
And in the cradle of my mind I held –
As I might nestle a perfect stone in my palm –
The open secret of the world at large.

And edged as was the bright sky was my mind
With clear and solving ever-meaning words
The kernel of this great truth greatly to show.

Two steps along the track and the words had gone.
The day and grasses faded to a beauteous
Example only of a lovely land.
My pebble out of water has no lustre;
Seems, shown to you, to have no point at all.
The shore is dark now, my mind gone again
But somewhere must the pulse of light be lurking
Pushing at flaws to break through. Is it under the skin
Of the stone, or wrapped in the mesh of the mind?
Is there a good sharp blade to cut it free?

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and his immediate subordinates are, of course, entitled to exercise editorial control over what is to be transmitted by the BBC. I have had scripts mauled or rejected before now, and not even the most rabid paranoia, nor the worst excess of arrogance, can allow me to argue that the BBC should be compelled to screen my work. In the last resort, I would not even rest a case on the ludicrous delay, wasteful extravagance and bureaucratic inefficiency which bans a play when it has already been made: such ill-mannered nonsense is a matter for accountants, management consultants, the parliamentarians who fix the licence fee and an Annan Committee examining alternative structures for getting stuff on the screen.

The case is simpler: Milne is wrong. Television critics from the *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Times* and *Time Out* who have by accident or subterfuge seen the tapes say it is at the very least an interesting play that should be shown. The Head of Drama thinks so, too. And the Head of Plays, who has just left the job. And the new Head of Plays. The Drama department, the Arts department, many directors and writers, and all those concerned in making the play are of similar mind. They are not so much angry on my behalf as on their own: the programme makers detect signs of a loss of nerve in those set above them. Indeed, a deputation of drama producers has been to Milne to tell him so. But there is no one more stubborn than a puritanical Scot in a corner and it is because I realise that his elusive half-suggestion that the affair might be reconsidered has not yet been taken further that I am writing this piece.

Brimstone and Treacle is near to my heart (or liver anyway) because I think it may be the best play I have written. The fast diminishing residue of what was once an almost evangelical passion about the place of drama on the television screen, rather than simpering self-love, makes me demand that you should be *allowed* to see the play. Unlike Alasdair Milne, I am assuming, of course, that you are grown up and know how to work the off-switch. You can reach him if you wish to object to his censorship by telephoning the BBC on 01-743 8000 and asking for the Ghost of Lord Reith.

Opera

Bayan Northcott

Plenty o' Somethin'

Porgy and Bess *Decca SET 609-11* £10.50

A great gaudy wreck of a 'folk opera' was what Gershwin's masterpiece got called in this column last month. Now, saving the 'great', I must take it all back. The new recording has a few blemishes. Some of the extra effects – steamboat whistles, hurricane blasts and whatnot – are a bit insistent, the Bess of Leona Mitchell occasionally sounds strained above the stave and Lorin Maazel misses a little of the swinging gentleness in that remarkable canonic opening to Act Three, 'Clara, don't you be downhearted'. Yet this seems to me to be about his only lapse. If the warmth and conviction of the all-black cast, headed by the sonorous Porgy of Willard White, together with the ebullient Cleveland Chorus and Orchestra, and the vibrancy of the Decca recording are all that could have been expected, the continuity and sweep of Maazel's pacing are revelatory. Heard like this, and in its entirety at last, *Porgy and Bess* displays a sophistication of structure far beyond the connotations of 'folk opera' and an uninhibited richness of content to which the ambivalent reaction, 'gaudy', merely reveals the inhibitions of the critical ear. Least of all can the work be dismissed any longer as a dramatic wreck.

Though, the interesting element in all this is not ostensibly a dramatic quality at all. Gershwin's basic strength as a composer was surely the instinctive musical intelligence of his piano-playing fingers; he seems to have assimilated the devices of generations of entertainment pianists, of jazz, blues and Jewish cantillation, and of a whole range of 'serious' composers largely through a process of playing over and over. One aspect of his mastery of keyboard harmony was an inexhaustible facility for improvising counter-subjects and textural variations to his melodies – as the teeming orchestral accompaniments in *Porgy* continually demonstrate. But the unique complexity of the melodies themselves in the field of popular music seems to have come about by the same process of distillation – for the cumulative intensity of a number like 'My man's gone now' is not just a matter of a good tune, but of a unity of its phrasing with the specific rate and spacing of its chordal accompaniment, asymmetrically deployed over a formal span of 94 bars.

More remarkable is the degree to which the opera synthesises a stylistic variety wide even by Gershwin's standards. Much of the score was composed 'on location' in 1934-5 near Charleston where he notated the cries of street vendors and was overwhelmed by the clashing polyphony of a black Holy Roller prayer meeting. But some of the more extravert choruses in *Porgy*, such as 'Oh, I can't sit down!', are closer to vaudeville, while for 'sophisticates' like Sportin' Life Gershwin reverted to the faintly louche smartness of his earlier Broadway shows. Texturally the music ranges from the delicacy of two-part inventions for solo strings, by way of a full-scale 'fight' fugue of almost Stravinskian bite, to some perorations of a brassy fulsomeness that summon up Hollywood. But Delius and Debussy tinge other moments; patches of chromatic harmony and gamey orchestration occasionally sound like Berg – who presented Gershwin with a copy of his *Lyric Suite* in 1928 – and there are even some bars of *sprechgesange* and chords in fourths out of Schoenberg – with whom he played tennis. Yet apart from the Hollywood bits – which, I must confess, I still find an embarrassment – there is scarcely a measure without some characteristic Gershwin transmutation.

But most impressive of all is the large-scale command of operatic direction and scale. This is not just a matter of thematic repetition, although the recurrence of 'Summertime' and the fight fugue in the last act is clearly intended to point a symmetry with the first and the set numbers are linked by a continual, often subtle tissue of motivic variations. It is even more Gershwin's grasp and contrast of scenes as entities. The opening scene of Act One, an elaborate sequence of character and thematic introductions which sounded so hopelessly slow and discursive in the old CBS recording, is revealed by Maazel as a continuous accumulation of tension from the languor of 'Summertime' to the Crap game murder, half-an-hour later. Yet Gershwin's very next scene makes a virtue out of slowness in the monumental series of choruses for Robbins's wake, while discursiveness itself becomes the dramatic point of Act Two, Scene One, in which such episodes as Bess's phoney divorce are presented as 'just another event' so to speak in the general, on-going life of the community.

Perhaps most intriguing is the final scene of Act Two in Serena's room, framed in an extraordinary semi-free heterophony of chanted prayers and punctuated by outbursts of orchestral fury every time someone opens the door to the hurricane outside. Its parallel with the pub scene in *Peter Grimes* has been noted by other commentators, but the resemblance between the two operas now seems to me to go much deeper in scene construction and particularly in methods of projecting recitative; the 'Good mornin', sistuh!' sequence in Gershwin's Act Three, Scene Three, for instance, could occur in almost any of Britten's earlier operas. Any doubt that he must have studied *Porgy* intensively when he was in America around 1940 is surely removed by the almost literal quotation from Gershwin's 'Gone, gone, gone' in the middle of the 'You don't know all' blues in *Paul Bunyan*.

Yet as far as I know, neither Britten nor his associates have ever included Gershwin in the acknowledged list of his stylistic sources, and this curiously parallels the silence Copland has always maintained about the obvious comparison of his early attempts at 'symphonic jazz' and those of Gershwin. Of course, both Britten and Copland were in the process of developing musical styles of conspicuous economy and definition in their search for accessibility. One may surmise and understand their anxiety to keep at arm's length a creative personality who had maintained an even greater accessibility by an alien and seemingly indiscriminate musical luxuriousness. Yet for non-composers, that 'indiscriminate' pinpoints the real challenge thrown up by Gershwin.

After the week of sleepless nights the riches

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of *Porgy* have given me – Hollywood bits and all – I begin to suspect that the question is not whether his major efforts attain 'organic form', or whether he really succeeded in uniting classical and popular idioms, but whether our habitual categories of judgment and taste are not overthrown altogether by the size of his talent.

Films

John Coleman

The Segal

The Black Bird *Columbia*
The Duchess and the Dirtwater Fox *Carlton*
Stubby *Paris Pullman* and *Phoenix*
The Likely Lads *ABCs Bloomsbury and Edgware Road, general release*

In the most fetching way possible, George Segal is never entirely free from pain. Sometimes he sets out to buy it. Under stress, the canine eyes roll ever so gently up, the jaw drops a millimetre, the nearly handsome face almost winces: this is a life of ifs and buts. Even when the going is good, the Segal brashness is half-hearted, serving to mask a foetal floor on which a nice, lesser fellow is trying to sleep. He is Mr Rueful, none too precisely anyone and yet approaching everyman, a very winning loser. It is hardly his fault that his peculiar talent for ingratiation should be available for scrutiny twice in the same week, though perhaps the sort of luck his screen persona has prepared us for. In the double event, he is a semi-saving presence.

Fans of John Huston's classic *The Maltese Falcon* may well start whirring in all directions at a spoof re-make, *The Black Bird*, for which Mr Segal must take his whacks in that he not only stars as Sam Spade Jr but is credited as executive producer. The Dashiel Hammett original, hashed around for the third time by Huston in 1941, is properly put through the mincer in this contemporary version. (One wonders if Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye*, which melted a Chandler to a lackadaisical modern mould, has started off another instant trend.)

Son of Spade is an unwilling 'tec, with an outer office full of blacks and an inherited secretary, Effie (plump, contemptuous Lee Patrick an incredible 34 years on from the Huston). 'God, how I hate that woman,' blurts Segal, having pointed out to his clientele that food stamps will get them nowhere. Elisha Cook is another retrieval, as Wilmer, found in a night club raving of frails and shamuses before a knife in the back does for him. Story by Don M. Mankiewicz and Gordon Cotler, direction and screenplay by David Giler, and so far and farther a laugh a minute by current standards. There is genuine wit in some early words and situations; Stéphane Audran (an escapee from Chabrol) is a latterday Mary Astor, apparently living in a de luxe annexe to an unorthodox Russian cathedral, where she mixes gourmet dinners with knock-out drops for young Spade; the finest literal slow burn in a decade is achieved when a cigarette butt is nonchalantly flicked into a street bin. No mean reprise is played on that last gag, confounding expectations, and Audran's feckless English ('See if the coast is clean') leads to semantic squabbles which allow Segal to deploy his full, teeth-clenched exasperation. Like his battered car, the vehicle goes downhill around midway, what with a Nazi midget and growling Lionel Stander as unwanted side-kick.

It could be that, as a subsidised viewer yearning to be amused, one is overly grateful for flashes of true comedy. That *Black Bird* has just enough to make it recommendable. Oddly, the Chekhovian cry of 'I am a Segal' rings more tinnily in Melvin Frank's *The Duchess and the Dirtwater Fox*, where the good, bruised actor is simply co-starred with Goldie Hawn as the second half of the title: he does the devil of a job but is miscast so that his mannerisms show. In fairness, it has to be said that Miss Hawn is miscast, too. I am fond of her seamless gear-shifts between delivery of the straight, knowing dirt and those scatty, innocent moments when she ponders, all sucked into herself, the thin man's Judy Holliday. She manipulates her mouth as if lips made all life's major decisions. Her giggle would have suited Rabelais and her gestures are strictly personal, semaphore from outer space. Unfortunately, she here spends most of her time and motions falling backwards to disclose her inexpressive knickers.

Everyone, of course, is miscast because the story is too uneasy and plain silly to permit of anything as grandiose as finding people to fit. If one may quote from the hand-out, 'Set in the wicked Old West, the film follows a madly mismatched pair on a perilous journey from San Francisco all the way to Salt Lake City'. Mr Segal is invited to enact a gun-toting, womanising, gambling chancer and Miss Hawn the whore he is at first forced, finally willing, to flee with. To say there is no amusement in the unsteady event would be a lie. Of the intended kind, and there is none of the other sort since this is a calculated send-up destined to make 'sophisticated' a bad word (which it is, Kingsley Amis, it is in its popular misuse), you would have to be a right old sobersides not to enjoy a crazed, breezy exchange in several maimed languages conducted by the principals across a fellow-travelling Mormon. Salt Lake City, in fact, inspires *these* excellent lines, which I give you to save an otherwise fruitless visit to your friendly local. Bearded gent: 'Mormons never kill.' Miss Hawn (prim): 'That's why there ar so many of the little buggers.'

Meanwhile, Sweden gets on with i famous cottage-industry of turning ou watchable movies. Bo Widerberg's *Stubb* (dubbed at the Phoenix, subtitled at th Paris Pullman) is a pleasant fantasy, rea ised for any dreamer who has kicked a foo ball. Without making a huge to-do about t the director struck up relations with h national team as they prepared for the la World Cup and somehow persuaded men bers of other participating sides to let them selves be photographed in action with th seven-year-old kid, booted through by on Johan Bergman, of his title. This litt kicker has the solemn phiz of a reflectio on the back of a spoon, taps a ball a toundingly well for his age (even if m sportive hackles rise as defender after d fender obligingly separates his legs to allo the sphere through) and is booked for ca ling a ref a rat. More amusingly, he booked to distraction in a different sense his grown-up team-mates yawn like thund as they read him to bye-byes from a ghast thing, selected by their manager, about wee bears. He stays wide awake while the nod and only plays against the USSR c the understanding that bears are out. Su denly, and it rather registers as such in th inoffensive but patchwork film, the k abandons fame in favour of schoolin 'Stubbyade,' any road, 'tastes like piss.'

Widerberg evidently latched on to th project as too good to be true: his ow devotion to football, a tot spotted in a pla ground, the sheer and decent accessibility all right-thinking Swedes when it came assembling a moral joke. One hates cavil (and there is also a running-an standing-still funny concerning the loc adult hero Stubby reduces to impoten with his twinkling feet), but corners ar penalties existed in the rich material th might have been brought to concert pitc Instead, it's a neighbourhood game in fee ing that Ealing – and Tibby Clarke as o splendid home-grown writer – could ha bettered, always given that old Swedish e couragement.

Our actual cut-price offer is Micha Tuchner's *The Likely Lads*, all hot ar fresh from TV. It is not hard to visuali those Spinoffs, a really tight-knit thir generation émigré family, scurrying *masse* to the magic of seeing romantic B (Rodney Bewes) and caustic Terry (Jam Bolam) having their Newcastle spats a reconciliations on the big screen and greater length. It would be foolish to kno the show, which ambers some authen acerbities and is probably OK about ma friendship in the provinces. Bob: 'In t chocolate box of life, the top layer's alrea gone.' Terry: 'Bloody hell.' The lift Terry's high-rise is forever occupied by copulating couple. Bob is having an 'ident crisis', which means he fancies other bir like terrible. Terry carefully addresses Bo wife thus: 'Hello, Thelma . . . pet.' T self-pity stops being a gas after a while; t recurrent curtain-lines (cut on a laugh a save the bother of what happened to th awkwardness) irritate with their glibne since a cinema is a house and not a hom a public place; when Bob and Terry lo

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their trousers, welcome Brian Rictus. See, rather, 6.30 tonight Friday at the NFT, a good short, *It Happened Here Again*, a brimming document in colour shot around the making of Brownlow and Mollo's austere *Winstanley*: fascinating.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Be My Host

Lenz *Hampstead Theatre Club*
Salad Days *Duke of Yorks*
The Caretaker *Shaw*

Lenz comes from the same lively typewriter as *Other People* and *Funny Peculiar*, the last of which, I see, is about to make a well-merited move from the Mermaid to the Garrick. But this time Mike Stott's subject is not sex but sanity, his main character peculiar without being the least funny. Writer Lenz seeks sanctuary with Pastor Oberlin, as he historically did in Germany, 1776. The very first night he attempts to drown himself in a water-butt, and within a month he has divided the household and alienated the parish with his freakish unpredictability. One moment he's begging his hearers to 'accept love, accept *my* love', and the next viciously and obscenely abusing them. Bouts of self-abasement alternate with claims to be a latter-day Hamlet, or even a Christ, complete with the power to raise the local dead. Eventually he creeps into the long-suffering Oberlins' bedroom, to rant and wave a pistol over their stricken bodies, and it is clear that the time for tearful adieux has come.

Part of Mr Stott's purpose is to define the point at which the most conscientious Christian will feel obliged to hand a guest his hat; but mainly it is to examine a psyche troubled enough to demoralise such a host. Lenz wants to be loving and giving, not to say godly and guiltless; and yet the more he tries to remodel himself, the angrier and more vindictive he feels. It's the sort of paradox that would have any respectable shrink looking for evidence of a cold and authoritarian father, especially when the patient's relationship with the Almighty zigzags as violently as it does here. Unluckily, Mr Stott doesn't provide enough background to make a satisfactory case-study of Lenz – as (surely) he must, since he cannot assume our automatic interest in a writer hardly known in Britain. I left the theatre feeling slightly cheated, but mollified by much of the acting, especially that of Jonathan Pryce, the young discovery who electrified the town in *Comedians* last year. That long, cracked clay-face, with ears sticking out like handles, as if it had been thrown together by a distraught potter, certainly suits the part of Lenz; and so, indeed, do the sensitivity and energy that come with it. Mr Pryce gives us the fury and the torment, and also a curious slyness. Here is a man on the rack, and here, too, is a small boy alarming the adults with an attack of emotional diarrhoea that may be partly faked. It is an ambiguous performance, and a riveting one.

According to Frederic Raphael's *Glittering Prizes*, young men and women went out from mid-century Cambridge in single-minded pursuit of fame, loot and other people's spouses. *Salad Days* starts in the same cloisters and involves much the same generation; but the hero vaguely hopes to cadge a job, any job, from a rich relative, the newly-graduated heroine expects to marry 'Viscount A, gay Lord B, or the Honourable Mr C' and both end up shattering the peace of Hyde Park by playing Julian Slade tunes on an outdoor honkey-tonk. I know which world I find more familiar, and it isn't the one of influential uncles, pet dressmakers, manicurists, 'the season', dancing bishops, sexless romance, and Jane, Timothy, Fiona and Nigel (Nigel *Danvers*, actually: that's right, *Lord* Danvers). There is, however, something strangely persuasive about the first action of our protagonists after being offered £7 a week to look after someone's piano. They subcontract the bulk of the work to a mute prole called Troppo, who scampers about collecting pennies like a human monkey, and they reward his pains with a princely £2 7s 6d, which he dumbly signifies to be too generous by far. It is a nice image of the way upper-crust people thought the world should wag in 1954 – and, indeed, sometimes still do.

It would be hypocritical of me to be too round with Mr Slade's fantasies now, since I recall bouncing out of the Vaudeville at the age of 13, thinking them awfully jolly. But even then, as I struggled to replicate his Squirrel-Nutkin songs on the family upright, I was struck by his mania for uncomely repetition. For instance: 'Oh, the things, the mad, mad things, that are done by a don, don, don.' Or the plaint of Timothy's parents: 'Find yourself something to do, do, do, do, do, do, find yourself something to do.' Jane enjoys sitting in the sun, the sun, the sun, not to mention the sun; and the cast spends its time looking, looking, look, look, look, look, looking for a piano, yes a piano, a p,i,a,n,o. The night I went the audience consisted largely of veterans of the Vaudeville, apt to whisper each other the plot and complain about changes, such as the omission of the spaceman's song, 'You never saw a saucer so saucy as mine'. Will the show strike, strike, strike a chord, a c,h,o,r,d with anyone else nowadays? For all the gleeful efforts of Sheila Steafel, Elizabeth Seal and others, I doubt it.

One proof of a good play is that it can be interpreted quite differently by different actors, as Kevin Billington reminds us with his revival of Pinter's tale of two brothers and a tramp. Mick, who usually seems to be plotting against the intruder from the start, is played by Simon Rouse as a house-proud dreamer who genuinely hopes for his cooperation; and Fulton Mackay is no cringing Welsh cadge, but a once-vigorous, still-canny Glaswegian-on-the-make. Somehow this reading survives the character's verbal attacks on the unnamed 'Scotch git' who has tried to knife him. We end with a thoughtful production – and a bigger play.

Edwin Brock

The Institute of Seasons

Walking past the gardens
at the end of our village
in the last small field
before the marsh begins
is a still brown horse
in the February sunshine

two boys play in the same
field in the same sun
as though to have each other
and the animal on one side
of the same equation proves
a conspiracy of things.

Walking past the gardens
at the end of our village
crocuses break the path's black mud,
two cats lose their eyes
on nothing, and a tree
from last month's gale
settles forever among the reeds

the noise of summer is beginning,
the boys, the horse and the flowers
are written side by side;
and I go between them, shouting
between them, to hear myself
echo at the end of God's sleeve.

Paterfamilias

This deep sepia
matches exactly
the rough red Victorian covering
and the brown vase
with a picture
of someone scattering something

mathematically head-on
and almost lifesize
both eyes dominate the room
like a poster of Kitchener

with a duelling scar
the long jaw
could pass easily for Prussian,
and five feet below the frame
the legs may enter
jackboots or
Bond Street leather

no doubt pierces
its paper eyes;
for centuries
they have stared over guns
sure of only one thing:
that orders are made
to be obeyed

in boyhood
I prayed upwards
to this familiar cruelty,
now on a level
with my own eyes
I scrape its history
every day.

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Weekend Competition

No 2409 **Set by Walter Baby**

It is high time that eponymous heroes and heroines were allowed to get their own back. *Shakespeare* by Hamlet, *Milton* by Lycidas, *Jane Austen* by Emma Woodhouse. And be bold – *Max Beerbohm* by Zuleika Dobson, *Mikhail Bulgakov* co-authored by the Master and Margarita. May we have 120-word extracts by 7 May?

Result of No 2406 **Set by B. Mooring**

Competitors were asked for poems from Betjeman (or any previous Laureate) on what has been called 'the end of a fairy-tale romance'.

Report **by Little Keith**

A rather affectingly sympathetic response to the royal heartaches of recent weeks – well-informed, too. E. O. Parrott, however, deprived his wallet of £5 by referring to Margaret's consort as 'Robbie': normally, of course, I would have silently amended the howler – but Mr Parrott went and rhymed it with 'hobby'. Betjeman led the pack; two Masefields; no Cibber. £6 each to the winners.

After Betjeman

Princess Margaret Rose, Princess
Margaret Rose,
How mad I was, sad I was, glad when
you chose
A working photographer to be your mate:
What a lift for a lensman – oh, enviable fate!

How gracious, how spirited, how democratic
To form an alliance with an Instamatic!
But very soon after, tongues started to wag,
And others than Tony were seen in your Jag.

Now the romance is ended – no question,
of course,
Of getting a common-or-garden divorce;
Darkroom widow, alone with your children
and snaps,
The news-hounds will give you a break
now, perhaps.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

After Betjeman

Peering at the pictures phoney,
Of her idyll with young Tony,
On the new expensive Sony,
Sat Mrs Armstrong-Jones.
Wishing now that she were single.
Able with the herd to mingle
Fancy-free and heart a-tingle,
Was Mrs Armstrong-Jones.
So she asked her older sister
If she could discard her mister;
Now she's loose, but Lloyds still list her,
As Mrs Armstrong-Jones.

JETHRO B. TUCKETT

After Cecil Day Lewis

Alas for the arty ('such fun at a party')
Swinging young smarty,
Slick, cool Kodachrome Boy;
The passion you stutter, when Love clicks
his shutter,
Can suddenly gutter –
The royal sweetmeats cloy.
For Love's hocus-pocus, by blurring the focus,
Transforms to a crocus
The rankest of garden worts;
The image that glinted so subtly – once printed
Seems vulgarly tinted –
And then how the retina hurts!

ANDREW MCEVOY

After John Dryden

All human things are subject to decay:
When Fate compels, meek Furrytales obey.
Now cruel Fate has caught in his/her net
Two loves, whose memory lovers cherish yet,
(And keep tear-sprinkled, in two pots of gold,
By potted ghosts of Thisbe and Isolde).
Banality! Withdraw thy dishpan hand
From too-romantic Photo-Furryland;
Spare, dismal daughter/son of the Middle Class,
This dashing lad, this short but noble lass;
Let Grub-Street gossips dip empathic pens
In tears; let tears blur every photo lens,
And tint the prints with rose, that all can see
Not Truth, but Beauty's slick facsimile,
More rare than real, making the most of least,
To render tragic what is merely *triste*.

PETER SCHROEDER

After Alfred Austin

Upon my coloured screen, the bland
announcers state:
'There won't be a divorce, but they
will separate.'
And when one looks back fondly to the
nuptials in the Abbey,
Such a very casual ending seems somehow
rather shabby.
It grieves each loyal heart to see how Eros'
whims dispose
Of her whom as a little girl we knew as
'Margaret Rose'.
Her home-life has been most unlike that of
her queenly sister;
And now, I fear, her future years present a
dreary vista.
Unhappy chance did earlier, in the lists of
Love, defeat her –
When Church and State prevented her from
wedding gallant Peter.
But she, as well as lesser fry, may prove the
third time lucky –
So keep your pecker up now, Ma'am, be reso-
lute and plucky!

CLAUDE SPETTIGUE

After Masefield

I must go down to the seas again, to the warm
and welcome isles,
For all I ask is a sweet relief from the cameras
and the smiles,
From the bloody films and the gimlet eyes of
the sycophantic types,
And the Daily this and the Sunday that with
their moralising gripes.

I must go down to the seas again to escape
from the dreary rounds
Of the duty lunch with the same old bunch and
the same old horsey sounds,
For all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing
fellow rover,
And a quiet drink and a quiet sleep when the
quiet day is over.

I must go down to the seas again, far from the
fairly tale:
It's a wild call and a clear call, but it puts me
beyond the pale.
When the Woman's this and the Woman's that
have enjoyed their little spiel,
Then I'll go down to the seas again and live
my life for real.

GERRY HAMILL

Assiac

Chess Board

No 1379 **How to Open**

Open what? A chess game of course, and that's the title of the most interesting of some books just issued for this country (at £4.50) by RHM Press, New York, published by Sidney *Fried* and edited by Burt *Hochberg* who is, of course, the editor of the voluminous U.S. monthly Chess Life & Review. What makes this book so interesting – and to some extent unique in opening literature – is the strictly individual approach of its seven authors, *Evans, Gligoric, Hort, Larsen, Petrosian, Portisch* and the late Paul *Keres* whose contribution ('Secret Workshop of a Grandmaster') may well be the most fascinating of the lot. Each of them has some 30 pages to deal in some depth with this or that aspect of some favourite line. I dare say that an ambitious young player studying this book will add to his understanding of opening theory a good deal more than by swotting up variations in more specialised works.

One of them is The *French Defence*, also published by RHM (at £5), and the authors *(Gligoric, Uhlmann, Botvinnik* and *Karpov)* are certainly among the most distinguished experts of that particular opening, providing individual contributions rather than collaboration.

The third of the RHM titles just out (at £4.50) is *42nd USSR Championship*, edited by David *Levy*; the book – copiously documented and illustrated – of the 1974 Leningrad tournament in which Tal and young Beliavsky shared top-honours with Polugayevsky and Vaganian a mere ½ point behind. Here's the exciting finish of the 12th round game Tal-Vaganian; I use Bronstein's notes. /1k1r4/1bp5/1p1p3R/p3ktBp1/P2Q2P1/2P1PPK1/4q1P1/7R/.

29) Rh8 Tal could have won by 29) Qd1,Qe3:; 30) Qc1, but he thought he had seen further than his opponent in the trappy play to come, **Rh8:**; Tal expected 29) . . . Bf3; 30) Rd8:†,Ka7; 31) Rg1, Bg2:; whereupon 32) Be4 looks like a winner but is refuted by . . . Qg4:†; 33) Kf2,Qe4:; 34) Rg2:, Qf5†!; drawing. But I was going to avoid 32) Be4 and play Qd1 instead. Alas, what I had forgotten was that Black can simply exchange Rooks first; **30) Rh8:†,Ka7; 31) Be4** Both players had been aiming for this and Tal thought his next move won outright, but Vaganian had a surprise ready, **Ktf3:!; 32) Qd3,Ktg1!** Tal made the Q-move right away and Vaganian replied just as quickly, after which Tal thought for about an hour; **33) Kh2,Ktf3†; 34) Kg3, Ktg1;** and since the Q-swop would be hardly in his favour White had to agree to the draw.

The 4-pointer for beginners is a game position in which White won a piece by two forceful moves. For 6 ladder-points **B** is a draw neatly achieved in just about half a dozen moves, a brand new *Schach-Echo* piece. **C** (for 7) is a win in which Black though losing a piece seems to make all the running until he suffers a delightful mate on move 9. Usual prizes, entries by 3 May.

A: Walker-de Jong 1975: /r1b2rk1/pp3pp1/4p2p/2bkt4/3q1B2/P2B2Kt1/1PPQ1PPP/R4RK1/.

B: Hemmo Axt 1976: /2kt1kt3/3Kt1Ktpk/16/1q4P1/8/1B4B1/K7/.

C: Liburkin /R7/6Kt1/8/4p3/4k3/6kt1/7b/3K4/.

Report on No 1375 *Set 26 March*

A: 1) . . . Be4:!; 2) Re4:,Rd4:!!;3) Ktf3 (Relatively best), **Re4:!; 0-1.**

B: 1) g7,Bb3:; 2) Kte4!,Re4:; 3) c7!,Rc4; 4) g8=Q† etc. Or **1) . . . Rg3:; 2) Ktd4!,Bd1; 3) c7!, Bg4; 4 g8=Q†,** etc.

C: 1) a6†!,Kc8:; 2) b7†,Kb8; 3) Kte5,Ktc5†; 4) Kb5,Ktb7:; 5) Ktc6†,Kc8; 6) Kta7:†,Kb8; 7) Ktc6†, Kc8; 8) Kte7†,Kb8; 9) a7†!,Ka7:; 10) Ktc6††.

Many bouquets for **C.** Prizes: G. Abrahams, D. E. Cohen, J. Gill, P. Hodgson, G. W. Richardson.

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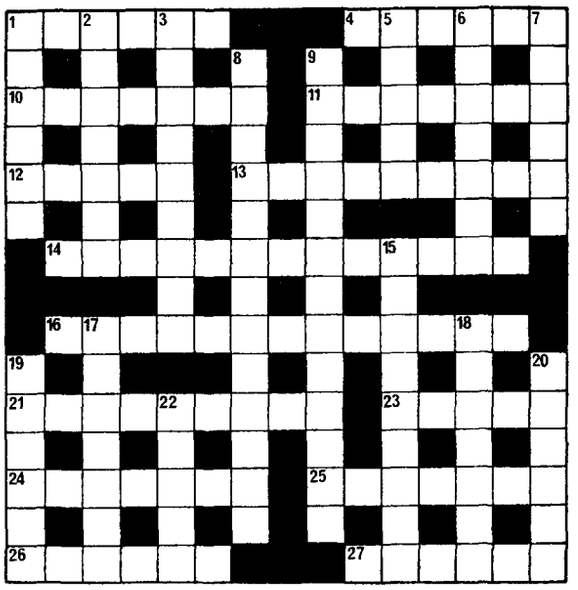
Weekend Crossword 1161

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1161, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 4 May.



ACROSS

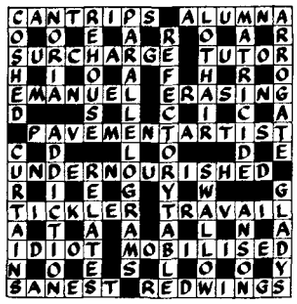
1. Make one pay for a flower (6).
4. A bottle for the child behind the vehicle (6).
10. Country which has prohibition among other things (7).
11. Have a word with the members in memorable phrases (7).
12. Island which is in the Pacific or further away (5).
13. Shock when the vehicle is in a high wind (9).
14. They may be ridden without danger to the pedestrian and make her crossing OK. (7,6).
16. Food for an article written in between rural romances (7,6).
21. Over evil I reform out of royalist sentiment (4,2,3).
23. Encounter which is fair outside the ring (5).
24. Entice among those who follow heedless of consequences (7).
25. Officials concerned with altering the postage (7).
26. Farm worker who looks right in town (6).
27. Ancient Jew who needs a hundred to fulfil the basic requirement (6).

DOWN

1. I am in the spot for fish (6).
2. Prohibition is here although there is room for drinks in the middle (7).
3. Coastal resort makes a girl flourish (9).
5. Foreign bodies which are not quite lost (5).
6. It keeps one calm so that honour is retained by a married woman (7).
7. Supporters from south in Middle East country (6).
8. A pleasant place for killing a comedian (7,6).
9. In the grammar school there is little grasp of peasant occupations (13).
15. Sees to the regulation again and studies about the righteous (9).
17. There would be a circle over it if the town were in ruins (7).
18. What teachers do with the money for the centre (7).
19. Maintained we do a change about five (6).
20. A piece of cricket for a rowing man (6).
22. 'The unimaginable —— For solitary thinkings' (Keats) (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1159



Prizewinners to No 1159

L. Abel (Port Elizabeth)
Ms Ann Rosenberg (London SW10)
Revd. A. Nelson (Widnes)

Appointments

ECUADOR

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Personal

WRITER, *Arts Council grant, m.*, 33, seeks secluded room in quiet, congenial (literary?) house, central London, to live, write novel. To £8. Box 3709.

WERE YOU? more or less raised in an institution, orphanage etc. Psychologist, still troubled by his orphanage childhood, would be very grateful hearing from you. P. Shriver, 4 Coolinge Rd, Folkestone, Kent.

MIDLANDS BASED ROLLS ROYCE with *driver for hire, by hour/day. Tel: Rugby* 76822 (STD 0788).

THE LEFT & THE ENVIRONMENT. If you share Jeremy Bugler's concern about the Left's neglect of this vital issue, join the Socialist Environment & Resources Association, named as the only left group campaigning from his standpoint. Details: Box 3804.

ISRAEL KIBBUTZ schemes. For details *send s.a.e. to Project 67 (NS), 21 Little* Russell Street, WC1. Tel. 01-242 3506.

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NEW MONTHLY theatre magazine invites factual articles on all aspects of amateur work: stage, film, specialist, choral, etc. Send *contributions* not exceeding 2,000 words to R. D. J. White, Aviary Moor, Rowly Drive, Cranleigh, Surrey.

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Entertainments

NATIONAL POETRY CENTRE, 21 Earl's Court Sq., SW5. Fri. 23 April 7.30 p.m. Nick Totton & Paul Green. Sat. 24 April 7.30 p.m. The American poet Kenneth Koch.

POETRY READING by Dannie Abse, Jon Silkin, Maureen Duffy at The Wine Bar, King's Arms, Sloane Sq., SW1. 8 p.m. Wed. 28 April. Adm. 50p. Students 30p. OAP's 20p. Sponsor: New Arena of Arts.

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Theatres

EMBASSY THEATRE, Swiss Cottage 'Downright Hooligan' 28, 29, 30 April at 7.30 p.m. Embassy Studio 'The Late and Doctor Korczak and the Children' 4-8 May inclusive at 7.30 p.m. Embassy Theatre 'See How They Run' 11, 12, 13 at 7.30 p.m. Box Office opens 2-6 p.m. Tel. 722 8186.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE CLUB. 722 9301. Evgs 8.0, Sats 5 & 8. 'Lenz' by Mike Stott.

LYTTELTON (New National Theatre) 928 2252. Sat. at 2 'Hamlet' (uncut text runs for 4 hours). Sat. at 7.45 'Happy Days'. Tues. & Wed. at 7.45 'Plunder'. Over 100 excellent £1 seats on sale day of performance from 8.30 a.m.

ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Eves at 8. Sats 4 & 8 'Waiting for Godot' directed by Samuel Beckett. In German, from the Schiller Theater, Berlin.

THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR. 95 61107. Lila Kedrova, Simon Williams, Veronica Quilligan, Mary Kerridge in 'Gigi', the comedy by Colette and Anita Loos.

Meetings

WESTMINSTER PASTORAL Foundation. Annual Lecture 1976: Laurens van der Post on 'Religion and the Renewal of Man and his Societies'. Chairman: Councillor Donald du Parc Braham, Deputy Lord Mayor of Westminster. On Thursday 6 May at 7.30 p.m. (doors open at 6.45 p.m., in Kensington Town Hall (opposite High Street Kensington Tube station). Admission free (no tickets will be issued). Inquiries to Robin Daniels: 930 6676.

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Marcia Williams on 'Politics and Politicians'. 7.30 p.m. 28 April. 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. Collection: all welcome.

UNCTAD IV. What prospects for the Third World? 6.30 p.m. Thurs. 29 April at Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Ave, WC2. Organised by the Focus Group & The World Development Movement. Adm. free.

THEODOR HERZL SOCIETY, and Lond. Univ. (E-M Dept), 57 Eton Ave, NW3. Tues. 27 April 8.15 p.m. History of the Holy Land. Dr Noah Lucas: 'Arabs and Jews - Their Rights'.

NO WELCOME FOR BRAZIL'S Dictator. Speakers: Ian Mikardo, Alex Kitson; Film Wed. 28 Apr. 7 p.m. Old Theatre, LSE.

CELEBRATE MAY DAY. Public Meeting: For Revolution. Org. by Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Chairman: Reg Birch. Sat. 1 May 7.30 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1 (nearest tube Holborn).

'SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION of Humanity. Richard Clements OBE. Sun. 25 April. 11 a.m. Sunday Forum, Sun. 25 April 3 p.m. 'Nuclear & Non-Nuclear Futures': David Elliott. Tuesday Discussion on theme 'The Role of the Teacher'. Tues. 27 April 7 p.m. 'A Critical Look at Experimental Methods': Peter Kaner. South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. 01-242 8032.

BUDDHISM by Christmas Humphries. 7 p.m. Tues. 27 April. All welcome. Tibet Society, 46 Belgrave Sq., SW1. 01-235 3720. Open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mon.-Thurs. & Sat. Prog. details of facilities, crafts etc. on request.

THE COMING WORLD TEACHER and The Masters of the Ageless Wisdom: from the esoteric teachings of Alice A. Bailey. A talk by Benjamin Creme. Friends' House, Euston Rd, NW1. Tues. 27 April. 7 p.m. Free.

PRACTICAL SUFI TEACHING: 'The Unity of Mysticism,' introductory talks by John Ross, at Friends House, Euston Rd., NW1. Weds at 7.30. 28 April, 5, 12, 19 May.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, 54 Holland Pk, W11. Sun. 25 April, 5 p.m. A musical recital by Mrs Balakrishnan. Wed. meeting at 6.45 p.m. All welcome. Vedanta magazine 40p.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 24 April 3 p.m. Open Day'. Tues. 27 April 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 28 April 6.30 p.m. Public Lecture, 'The Three Yanas of Tibetan Buddhism': Mike Hookham. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

THEOSOPHY, Public Talk & Questions. Sun. 25 April 8 p.m. Free. 'The Mystery of Mind'. S.a.e. for programme, book list & literature. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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WEDNESDAY, 28 APRIL, 7.15 p.m.
Friends Meeting House, St Martins Lane, WC2
TUESDAY, 4 MAY, 6.30 p.m.
Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, NW1
WEDNESDAY, 5 MAY, 6.30 p.m.
Meeting House, 120 Heath Street, NW3
THURSDAY, 6 MAY, 6.30 p.m.
Meeting House, 120 Heath Street, NW3

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